

NEW

An independent guide to Adobe® Photoshop®

**200 MINUTES OF
FREE VIDEO TUITION**

Photoshop®

Tips, Tricks & Fixes

Volume 7

- ✓ Tools
- ✓ Layers
- ✓ Adjustments
- ✓ Settings
- ✓ Effects

Fix common
photo
problems



Master
brushes,
filters and
the Pen tool

Discover more
from your
favourite tools



Suitable for all versions
of Adobe Photoshop

Welcome to

Photoshop®

Tips, Tricks & Fixes

Adobe's Photoshop is a system that surpasses any other of its kind. Created in 1988 by Thomas and John Knoll, it started out as a project for the former in displaying greyscale images on a monochrome display. His brother, John, soon got involved and together they produced what would soon become the leading program in digital photo editing. Since its release in 1990, not only has Photoshop gone on to become the market leader across Macs and PCs alike, but it has given life to a whole new way of creating media. No longer only used for simply editing and fixing photos, now full-blown pieces of art can be created; photomanipulations and digital artistry are among some of the respected forms of digital art.

In this book we aim to show you the full spectrum of what it is this amazing program can help you to achieve. From those first photo edits all the way through to beautifully rendered artworks. Not only that, free with this edition of Photoshop Tips, Tricks & Fixes comes a host of brilliant assets including real-media brushes, wallpapers and stock images. There is also over three hours of video tutorials at your disposal. You can find all of this brilliant assets at www.filesilo.co.uk/bks-673.



Photoshop®

Tips, Tricks & Fixes

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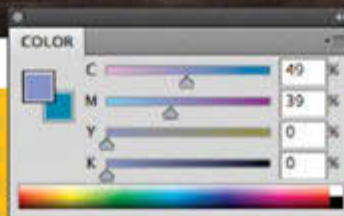


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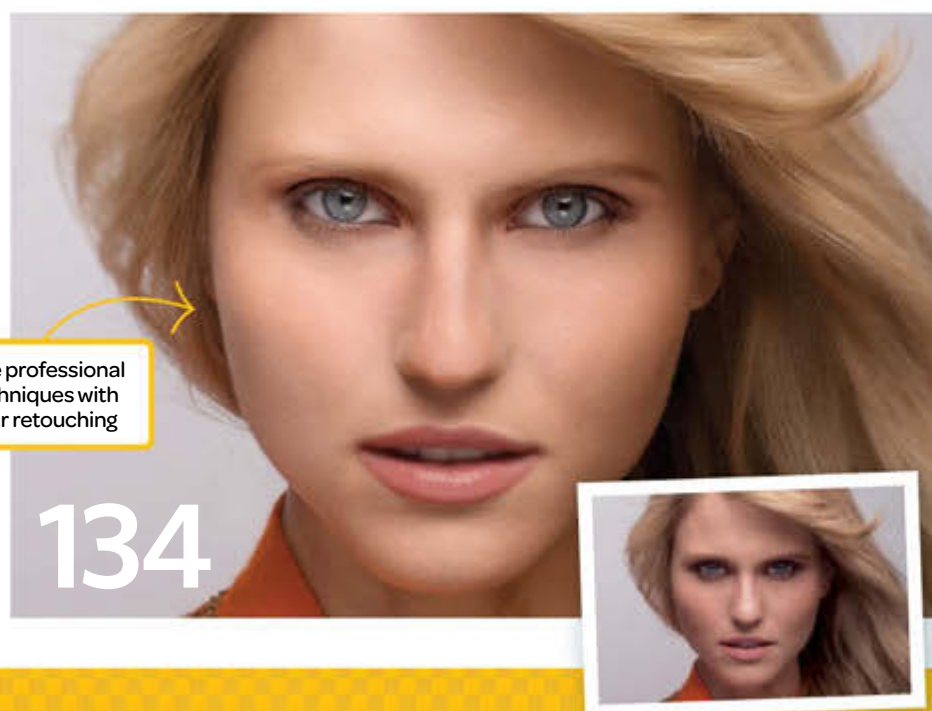


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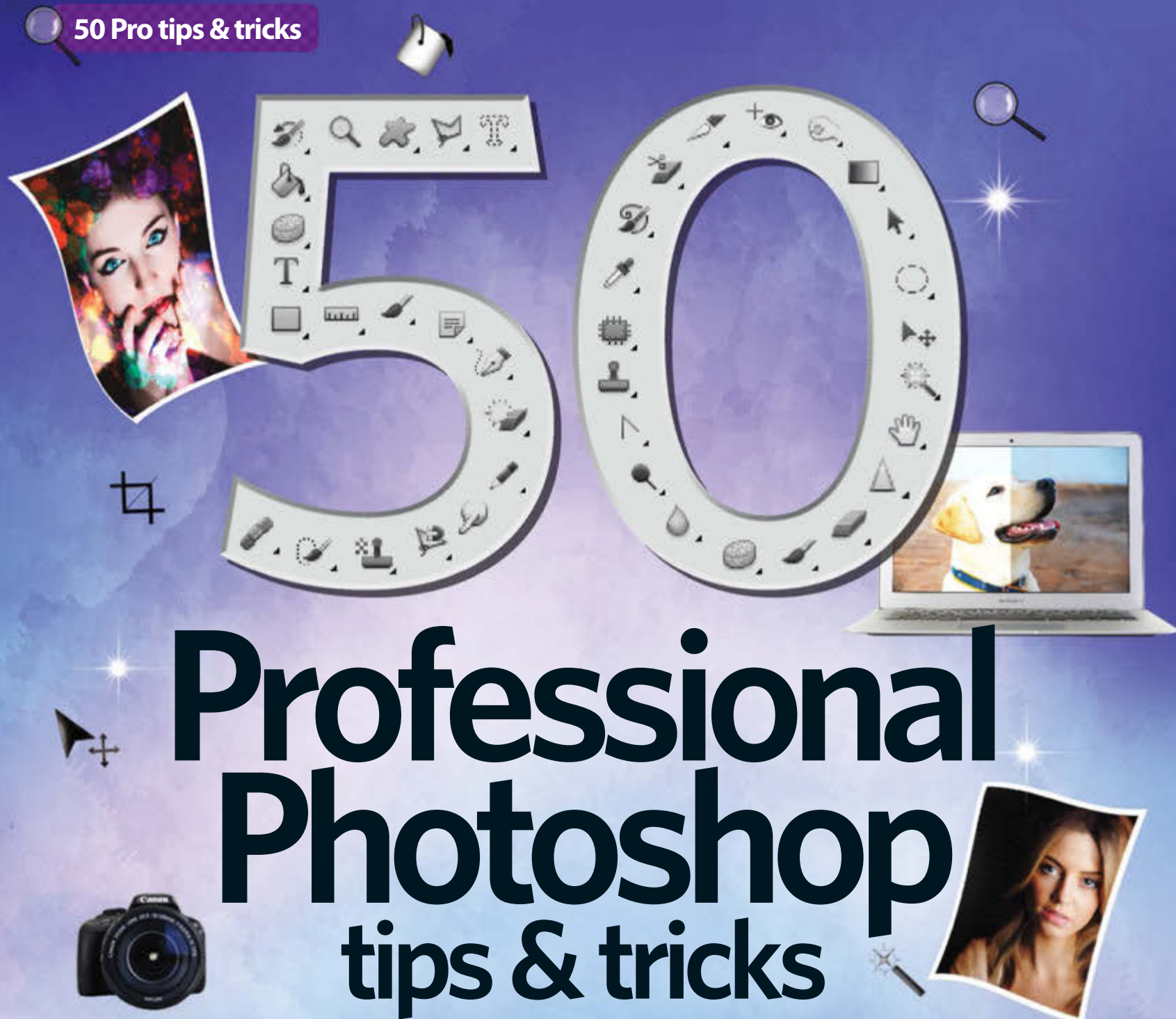
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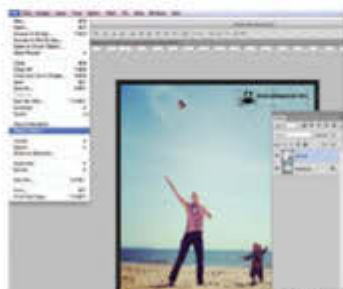
Professional Photoshop tips & tricks

We unveil some of our must-know Photoshop secrets and ask digital artists to do the same, to help you get the most out of Photoshop

THE LATEST PHOTOSHOP CC FEATURES

01. Linked Smart Objects

Linked Smart Objects can be added to several projects and updated across all of them in one go. It can save a lot of time if you have to add a logo or web button multiple times and need to change it later. Go to File>Place Linked and select an image to import as a Smart Object.



02. Perspective Warp tool

Perspective Warp is a powerful new tool that enables you to change the perspective of a photograph without distorting the objects in it. Go to Edit>Perspective Warp. In Layout mode, create planes that you want to preserve, then in Warp mode drag the pins to warp the content.





03. Blend photography & illustrative elements

DAVID DELIN
www.28162.com

One method I often use to integrate my illustrative elements or abstract forms is to check my composition using a horizontal symmetry. This method allows me to correct or remove items that are not in their place. I also take short breaks, bringing my attention to something else. It allows me to get a fresh look to see any faults in my composition. Finally, adjusting the colour balance and lighting are important to give credibility. I use adjustment layers on each element to obtain the best integration. In my case, Black & White and Curves adjustment layers are valuable elements. The first helps me to balance my scene and apply colours so they work together. Curves gives me more flexibility in colour correction and contrast.



04. Use two layers to blend textures together

ADAM SPIZAK
www.spizak.com

When blending textures or shapes in your images, remember that everything consists of light and shadow; blending assets on just a single layer will rarely give you premium quality. First, add the texture into your image, change the blending mode of the texture layer to Multiply, Darken or Overlay and, using a medium to large-sized brush with a soft edge, mask in only the parts of your texture that have darker elements and shadows. Duplicate the same texture (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and set the blending mode to Screen or Linear Dodge (Add); this layer will be for our highlights, so make sure it sits higher in the layer stack. Using a smaller size brush, mask in only the elements of the image that consist of highlights (specular, bright detail) to add missing light back to your texture. Separating your texture blending into two separate layers lets you colour correct and blend each aspect of texture more realistically and have more control over the final look.



TOP MASKING METHODS



05. Master the Pen tool

There is no way to get through masking without learning how to use the Pen tool properly. It's perfect for many masking jobs, but in particular those involving solid objects and/or in which there is little contrast between the foreground and background.



06. Make use of Channels

These are good for masking hair. Select the channel with the best contrast, then duplicate it. Use Levels and Curves to make the parts you want to keep black, and the parts you want to ditch white. Create a mask based on the selection of this layer.



07. Use Refine Edge

The Masks panel has been powerfully enhanced in the latest versions of Photoshop. You can run the Refine Mask function more than once; so do it once for hard edges using the Adjust Edges controls, and a second time for fine edges using Refine Radius.

50 Pro tips & tricks



08. Create even lighting

MIKE CAMPAU
www.mikecampau.com

When trying to smooth out your patterned fabric or even some blotchy skin, always create a brand new layer and set it to Soft Light blending mode, then fill it with 50% grey. You can then use the Dodge and Burn tools on that layer to lighten and darken the areas that need to have more even lighting. This way you keep the integrity of the material texture below and it is also non-destructive to your original image.



09. Keep the pixel data

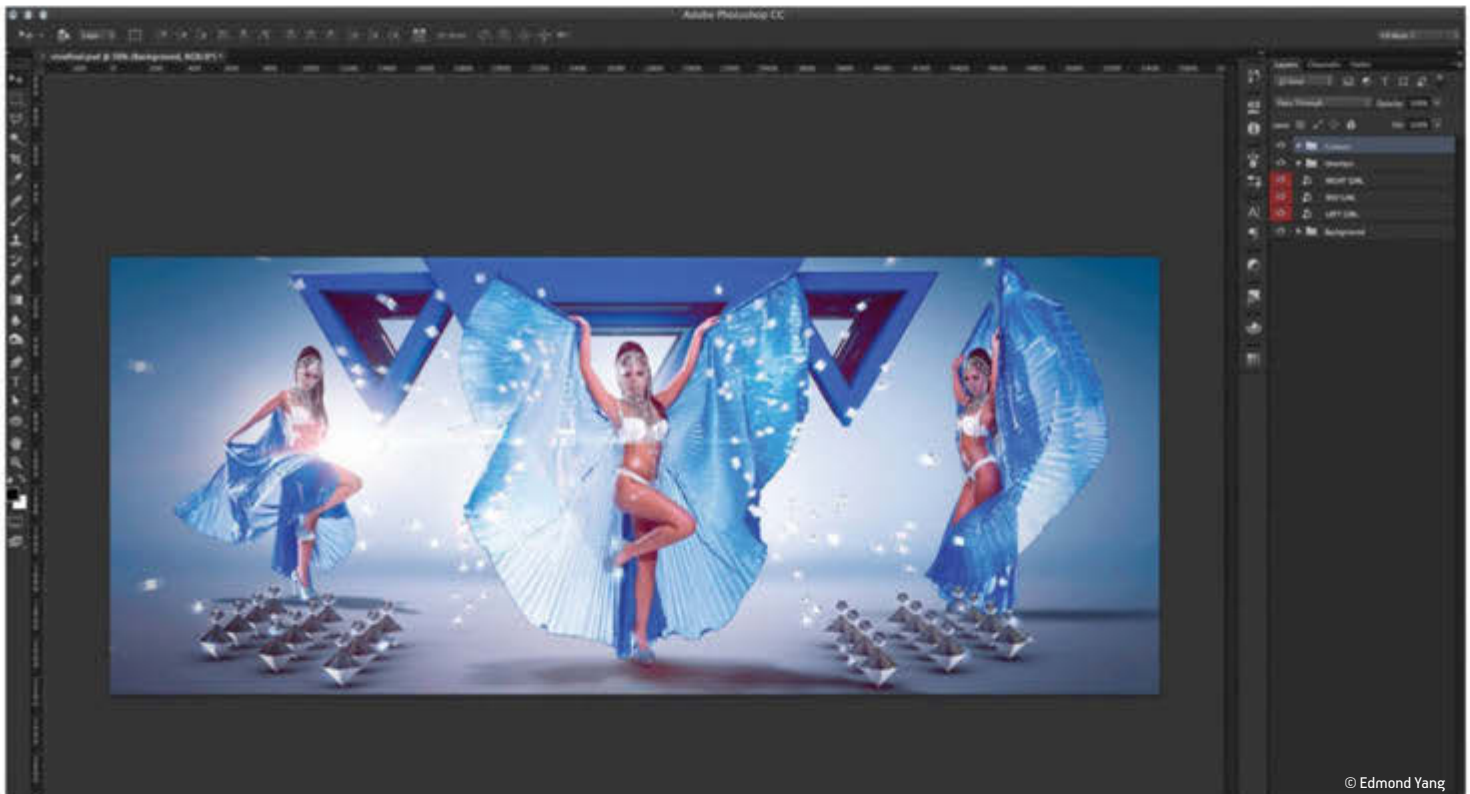
By making a bitmap a Smart Object, you will avoid ruining your pixels when you are transforming them. Keep in mind that the quality of the image will not be better if you're scaling up the bitmap.

10. Unclutter your layers

You can also turn a set of layers into one single Smart Object. Choose a group of layers, Ctrl/right-click and choose Convert to Smart Object. This is a great way to unclutter your Layers palette.

11. Repeat elements quickly

By making duplicates of Smart Objects, you can update all the instances at once by editing the source. Just double-click one of the instances, edit and save. Now all the ones in the document are updated.



TIME-SAVING TIPS

12. Create templates

If you often make the same products, such as web pages, then create template PSDs with the right sizes and common gridlines so that you have a starting point for every project.

13. Stay organised

This method is a lot quicker than using the Layers panel fly-out menu. Simply select the layers that you want to bring together then hit Cmd/Ctrl+G, for instant layer grouping.

14. Find the right layer

If you have a lot of layers and you need to find the right one for a particular object in your design, simply Ctrl/right-click on the object to see what layer it belongs to.

15. Merge Stamp Visible

This is one finger-twisting shortcut worth learning! If you need to create a merged layer that shows all your existing layers, press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Opt/Alt+E and Photoshop will comply.

16. Zoom in and out faster

Use scrubby zoom to quickly zone in on an area of your image. With the Zoom tool selected, click and hold your mouse key, then drag right and left to quickly zoom in and out.

© Pete Harrison and
Craig Shields



20. Improve glow effects

PETE HARRISON AND CRAIG SHIELDS

www.peteharrison.com / www.craigshields.co.uk

To achieve a striking glow effect on things like embers and sparks, be sure to set the layer blending mode of the sparks or embers to Screen. This will get rid of any unnecessary dark patches and will leave you with the bright coloured parts you want to use. For a brighter, more vivid effect, duplicate that layer and set it to Linear Dodge, then go ahead and add a Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) to really make it pop! Combine this technique with a Channel Mixer adjustment layer (Layers>New Adjustment Layer>Channel Mixer) to alter the colour of your sparks or embers. Experiment with different settings and colours for some sharp-looking lighting effects.

17. Collate your assets

If you use the same objects in your designs regularly – such as logos, shapes or typography – then bring them all together into one PSD so they are on hand when you need them again.

18. Set your own shortcuts

Only you know what tools and features you need quick access to, so go to Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts and set up key combos for all your commonly used functions to save time.

19. Make the most of Actions

If you do a lot of batch processing, set up an Action to perform common tasks so you can set it to run over images and leave Photoshop to it while you get on with something else.

21. Use Layer Comps

If you are creating artwork for a client, then you are likely to have to create different versions of the same image. Rather than saving out multiple documents with various layers turned on and off, you can use layer comps instead. These are 'snapshots' of your current layer setup that you can flick between for comparison in the Layer Comps palette.



01 The Layer Comps palette

Go to Window>Layer Comps to open the palette. To save the current layer setup, go to the Create New Layer Comp button at the bottom of the window and name it with an obvious title.



02 Stored information

A layer comp stores which layers are turned on and off, whether a layer has a particular blending mode applied and how each layer is positioned on the canvas. You can add comments to layer comps too.



03 Warning

If you make a change to your design that cannot be stored in a layer comp (for example, you delete a layer that is included in a comp), then you will see a warning triangle to show you that the layer comp is no longer available.

STAY
OUT OF
TROUBLE



22. Give type 3D effects in Photoshop

GORDON REID

www.middleboop.com

Here we have a couple of simple effects you can use to bolster your typography piece and give it a really sharp 3D look. First, take your type into Photoshop, add a thick Stroke, somewhere around 20px, and give it a Bevel and Emboss contour. Give it a Depth of around 450% and Size 10 with the direction Up. Depending on the size of the piece, make the contour 38 and anti-aliased. To finish off, add drop shadows and play about until you feel it works.



23. Use Left-handed brushes

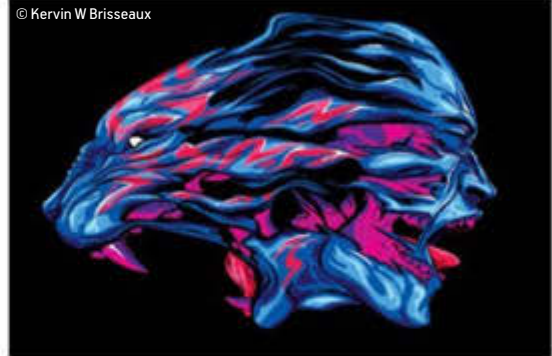
Some Photoshop brushes are designed to brush from right to left, which is the opposite of what is natural for left-handed painters. They may benefit from being flipped (indeed only some have the option to be); in the Brush palette, with Brush Tip Shape selected, you will see a Flip X checkbox. Tick that to flip the brush horizontally so it works left to right.



24. Overlay with an image

If you want to quickly clip an image to some text so that it fills the type, here is a quick tip for you. Create your text first and then open the image you want to use, making sure that it is above the text in the Layers palette. Now, hold down Opt/Alt and click on the line that separates the two layers, and the image will be clipped to the type layer automatically.

© Kervin W Brisseaux



25. Take a step back

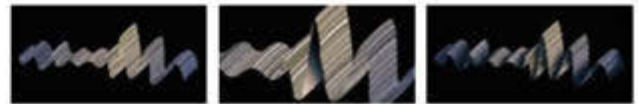
KERVIN W. BRISSEAU
www.brisseaux.com

Give your work time to incubate. If it isn't looking right, sometimes it's a matter of walking away for a few days or weeks before getting back to it. You'd be amazed at what fresh eyes can do for your work.



26. Create light and shadow with gradients

NICOLAS MONIN-BAROILLE
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I usually start off with a simple shape I can add shadows to, making a selection in places where a light would cast shadows, and start playing around with the Gradient tool. You can do this with lights as well, just in the opposite places. You have a lot of control, choosing the edges of your selection, the Opacity and the blending modes. I do each element one by one; it's some work, but the results really pay off. Gradients can change the colour mood in an artwork and where your lights come from – they're pretty powerful. Making use of that can be a great asset when creating intricate and realistic-looking work. I'm not a painter, but if you look at how lights and shadows behave, you can quickly learn how to apply this within your style. It makes for really great results and changes the way people look at your work."



All images © Nicolas Monin-Baroille

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE WITH PHOTOSHOP PREFERENCES

27. Purge your history states

If you find Photoshop is on the go-slow, you can use Edit>Purge to clear the Clipboard and History States. This will free up RAM, but bear in mind you won't be able to undo this.

28. Change the History States

If you use Undo a lot and often hit a point when you can't backtrack anymore, you can change the number of History States stored by going to Photoshop>Preferences>Performance.

29. control the Memory Usage

Go to the same window to control how much memory Photoshop uses. In the Memory Usage section, see your available RAM and how much of it Photoshop is allowed to eat into.

30. disable thumbnails

Having thumbnails in the Layers panel can be useful, but it can slow down your Photoshop performance. In the drop-down menu in the Layers panel, choose Panel options to disable them.

31. Save in Background

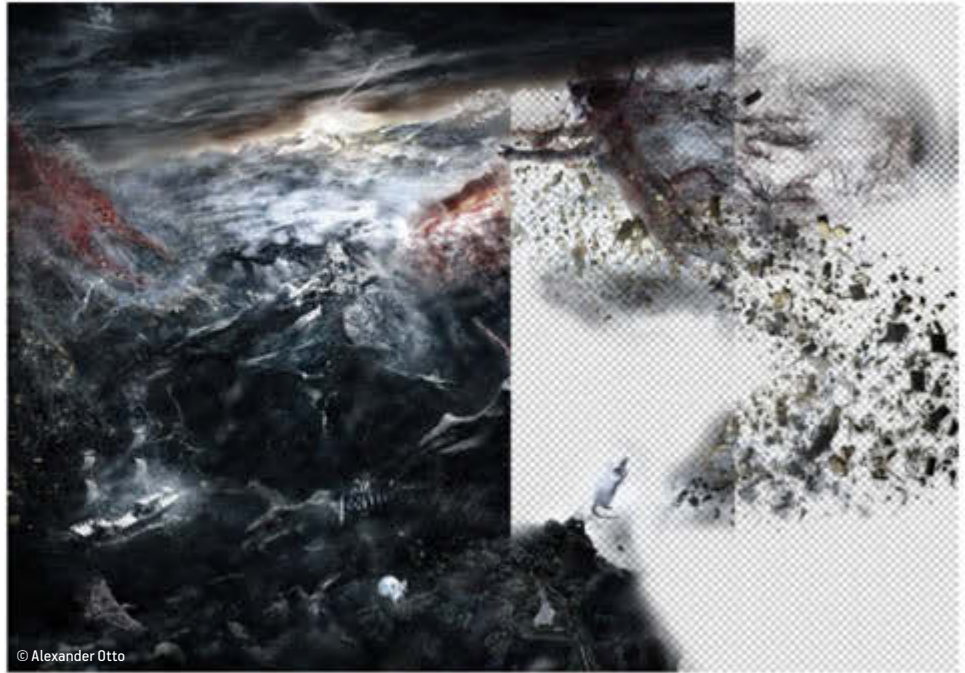
If you often forget to save your progress by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+S, make sure that Save in Background is activated by going to Preferences>File Handling.



32. Use 3D renders

ALEXANDER OTTO
www.alexanderotto.com

3D renders help me to create better work in many ways: to enhance a certain effect or style, create a more dynamic composition, for background elements or any kind of VFX. There is a wide variety of different 3D applications available and with almost all [of them] you can render multiple passes, which makes the post-production really easy. After rendering with multiple passes such as alpha, diffuse, shadow, reflection, depth and many others, I compose those elements in Photoshop together. I'd usually create a Smart Object of my imported renders and just use adjustment layers in combination with different blending modes to get the most out of my renders. A Gradient Map on Soft Light for contrast, Linear Burn for dark parts and for lights I'd use Linear Dodge.



© Alexander Otto

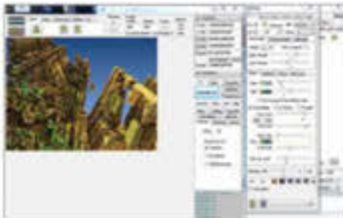


33. Use a 3D fractal generator

FINNIAN MACMANUS
www.behance.net/fmacmanus

A lot of artists don't utilise the vast number of easy-to-learn 3D programs out there; one of them is called Mandelbulb 3D. This fractal generator is free and can generate some very interesting

detail in a short amount of time. My concept here was to create a civilisation made out of trillions of mechanical parts, all evolving and developing independently, but functioning as a hive mind. Mandelbulb 3D is perfect for this because you can control the materials, reflections, and utilise the program in a matte-painting style to depict an epic scene. Below you can see the techniques used for the project.



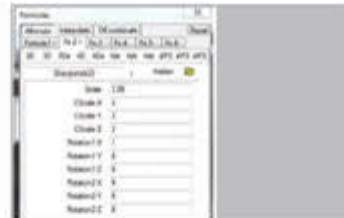
01 Download the software

The first step is to download the program and start getting used to the controls. You can get a copy of it at www.mandelbulb.com.



02 Use the right formula

For City Of Order, I used the Sierpinski formula to compose my artwork, which created a unique, almost city-like landscape.



03 Sample fractal

This is what the formula generates. You can also render multiple frames and patch them together with Photoshop, which is what I will do to create extra depth.



04 Finished render

I used three separate renders to create the scene, and then used clipping masks to cut out the desirable parts that will be integrated into the final image.

05 Final result

This is the final result, painted over in Photoshop. You can use this technique full scale like this, or just take small parts to incorporate into your art.

© Finnian MacManus



34. do your research

VALP MACIEJ HAJNRICH
hot.valpnow.com

Reproducing armour on a T-shirt is quite challenging. The most important thing is to know and understand sewing templates, so first of all make sure you have proper vector files from a tailoring company. Start with sketching each element of the armour. Get any T-shirt and use a ruler to measure

the size of each element. Print parts of the design on A4 paper, and compare if necessary. Search for as many references as possible and read articles. Use the Bevel and Emboss layer style to imitate engraving and visit stock pages to find real metal and gold textures.



All images © Valp



ANATOMY OF A GOOD WEBSITE DESIGN

POLLY PLAYFORD
www.pollyplayford.com



Website design is quite an art to master, and there are a lot of key elements that need to be right in order to make a page commercially viable. But fear not, as here are some top tips for creating great websites...

35. Make it friendly

The last thing you want is to frustrate an internet user – their patience is low. They'll give up pretty quick and go to another site if they can't find the button they're looking for.

36. Keep it snappy

Show the right amount of information with the minimum number of clicks. Keep the copy light or else nobody will read it. Have a 'read more' button if you have more to say.

37. Be striking

Make the most of larger modern screens and broadband (quicker loading times) by using big, impacting images. It says a lot in the shortest amount of time.

38. Stay original

Stand out from the millions of websites with some personality and character and be memorable. Be clever; allow it to aid usability, not obstruct it.

EASIER WEB DESIGN IN PHOTOSHOP

39. Get GuideGuide

GuideGuide is a free Photoshop extension that enables you to set up quick pixel-accurate grids. You can save your frequently used guide setups and it's a real time saver.

40. Create presets

When you open a new document you will see that there are presets for web and mobile. Adapt the dimensions and resolution to suit your projects, and save as a new preset.

41. Get your pencils out

Before starting work on any web design, draw out your layout first before launching straight into Photoshop. This will save you time in the long run as you have a clear starting point.

42. Save for the web

Photos shouldn't be too large in web designs, or it will affect your loading times – longer loading times mean a higher bounce rate. Use the Save For Web feature instead.

43. save in the background

If you often forget to hit Cmd/Ctrl+S and save your progress, make sure that Save in Background is activated by going to Photoshop>Preferences>File Handling.



44. Clean up scanned items

ARCHAN NAIR
www.archann.net

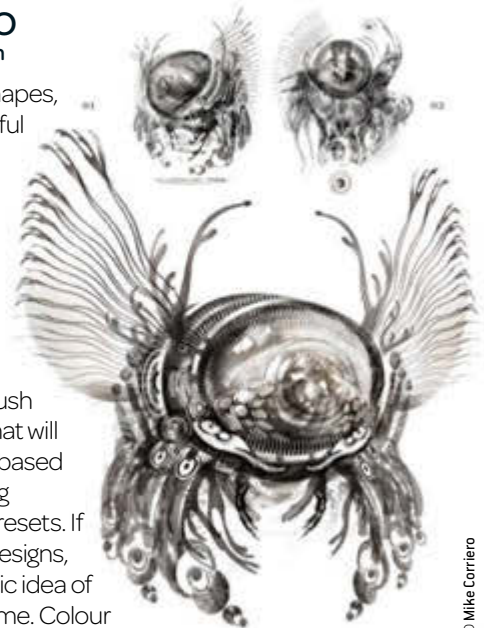
When using different mediums to mix with digital elements, it is important to create a level of sharpness and quality that matches the environment around the artwork. After scanning a watercolour paint or line art, add it to the composition and use Levels or Curves to bring more depth into the colours, shadows and highlights. If necessary, duplicate the layer and set it to Multiply at 20% to make the traditional medium stronger.



45. Create quick concepts

MIKE CORRIERO
www.mikecorriero.com

The idea of implied structure, shapes, texture and details are very helpful when trying to crank out quick concept ideas without the need to tediously polish them. Custom Shapes and Custom Brushes are very helpful in this area of design since you can provide repetition of patterns in a more form-bending manner. The brush options allow your brush shape to be used as a pattern that will flow in the Direction and scaled based on the Pen Pressure and Spacing options you'll find in the Brush Presets. If you stick with black-and-white designs, you're focusing more on the basic idea of the concept, which also saves time. Colour is largely a more aesthetic aspect, whereas focusing on the purpose, function and silhouette of the shapes merely needs to be explored in basic greyscale tones.



© Mike Corriero



46. Use the right brush options

JIANLI WU
wusunblog.blogspot.co.uk

Two brush options I frequently use are Transfer and Dual Brush. With today's drawing tablet pressure-sensitivity function, adjusting Opacity Jitter and Flow Jitter control options can greatly enhance painting experience with more ease, depending on what you need in the artwork. Personally, I tend to turn the pressure on and off for greater control over the pen to achieve the desired results at different stages of painting. Dual Brush opens up an amazing amount of options to create very unique brushes at your command. It especially comes in handy when you want to render different material textures. From soft to hard surfaces, you could pleasantly find what works best. Most importantly, continuously experimenting with the options allows you to discover the amazing functions Photoshop's Brush tool panel provides.



© Jianli Wu

CUSTOMISE YOUR BRUSHES

47. Customise the defaults

There are plenty of brushes built into Photoshop, but the real power comes from the ability to customise them endlessly using the options in the Brush palette. Experiment with things like Scattering, Texture and Dual Brush to create the exact effect you need.



48. Create your own

If you have a photo or vector image that you like, then you can turn them into your own brushes by using Edit>Define Brush. You can save these brushes into your Brush palette and create your own sets so that you have unique brush tips as and when you need them.



49. Download new sets

If you prefer to have ready-made brushes and Photoshop doesn't have what you need, then there are hundreds of websites that offer high-res brush sets to download. Many of these are free, so if you don't like them, just hit Delete and find a new set.





50. Lead viewers through your image

ROB SHIELDS

www.robshields.net

A great way to keep a viewer's interest in your composition is to establish a sort of visual rhythm within the image. When done successfully, each section of the image will lead the eye to the next, forming a visual loop that doubles as a kind of hidden roadmap. The idea is not to force the viewer to look at the image in a certain way, but merely try to nudge them in the right direction. This prevents their eyes from rolling off the image before they are done looking at it and also provides an inherent sense of motion to the image, making it feel dynamic.

Tips

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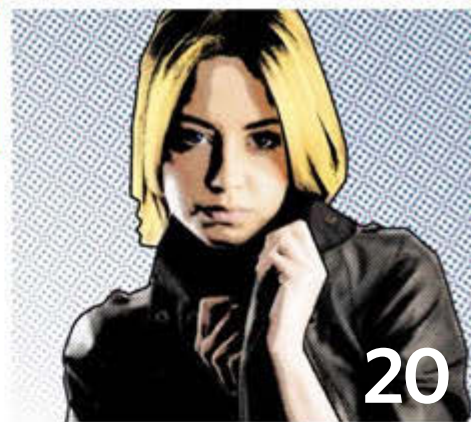
Utilise your Photoshop's 3D options

68 Master the Burn Tool

Enhance your portraits with the Burn Tool



Master Photoshop's best filters in just 12 hours!



“The Liquify filter is a great tool for retouching images or creating artistic effects”



COMBINE FILTERS

Many think of filters as being subtle effects that you apply to a picture to tweak it slightly, but they can totally transform a photo, and you can combine them for even more possibility.



MASTER 12 FILTERS IN 12 HOURS

We've picked 12 of our favourite Photoshop filters and come up with quick and easy ways to apply them to your favourite shots for incredible results





1. BLUR

Whether you need to obscure parts of a background or produce a slick, eye-catching action effect, the various Blur filters can be important allies in your imaging quest for out-of-focus perfection.

Let's look at two of the most commonly used Blur filters: Gaussian and Motion Blur. Both filters, along with the rest of the Blurs, are accessible under Filter>Blur. Gaussian is your basic and trusty adjustable blur. Motion Blur adds motion via adjustable angle and distance, creating a whole host of effects ranging from slight shifting to extreme motion.

Here we've combined both Gaussian and Motion Blurs to create a dynamic abstract scene for our joyful jumper.

2. BLUR GALLERY

The Blur filters are perfect for both beginners and digital-imaging vets. The intuitive controls are great for folks who are just getting started. Long-time users can quickly add these popular and useful effects with nominal fuss.



FIELD BLUR – This allows you to add multiple blur points, each capable of emitting various amounts of blur. Play with adding, moving and adjusting points until you get the perfect blend. You can even place off canvas for edge/corner blurring.



PATH BLUR – The newest member of the family allows you to create adjustable motion blurs along paths, opening the way for precise and targeted effects. You can even have multiple blurs going at once and Photoshop will composite the effects.



TILT SHIFT – Get the popular tilt-shift blur effect with minimal effort. You define an area of sharpness, and then adjust the edges where the image blurs. This is perfect for getting that miniature city or object look.



SPIN BLUR – This filter certainly lives up to its name, allowing you to creatively spin and blur around a rotation point. The strength of the effect is dictated by the Blur Angle control, which you can specify in degrees.

3. PLASTIC WRAP

Believe it or not, the Plastic Wrap filter is one of the most useful. It creates an effect on an image as if it is coated in shiny plastic, accentuating the surface details. You can create special effects such as shiny surfaces, liquid, glass, or even a metallic effect. There are only three adjustable options to control the filter: Highlight Strength, the filter's Detail, and finally the Smoothness.

EXPERT TIP

Dodge and Burn

Use the Dodge and Burn tools to enhance shadows and highlights before applying the Plastic Wrap effect. It will increase the details and help you to add more effect in areas. The Dodge and Burn tools are very handy when it comes to shiny effects.

ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Use the Levels and Hue/Saturation adjustment layers to increase the contrast and lightness respectively.

CLIPPING MASKS

Creating a clipping mask allows you to fill an object with images on multiple layers. To create a clipping mask, hold Opt/Alt and click between two layers.

Shiny surfaces

Create beautiful ice effects



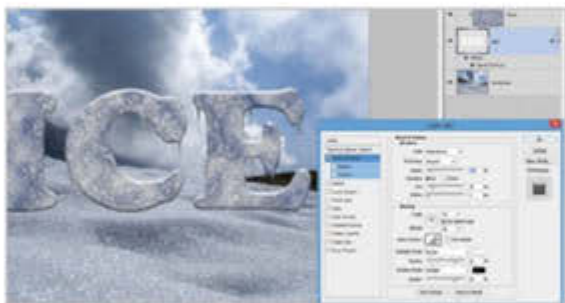
Set the stage

01 Go to File>Open 'Landscape.jpg'. Grab the Horizontal Type tool (T), choose a bold font size 300 (we used Cooper Std), set the Foreground colour to white and type the word 'ICE'. Now go to Type>Rasterize Type Layer.



Apply filters

02 Go to Filter>Liquify and create frozen drips. Create a new layer, name it Cloud. Set the Foreground/Background colour to white and blue and then go to Filter>Render>Cloud. Now apply the Gaussian Blur: Radius 5px and clip the layers.



Apply Plastic Wrap

03 Go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Artistic>Plastic Wrap. Set Highlight Strength: 20, Details: 15, Smoothness: 5 and then hit OK. Click on the ICE layer and go to Layer>Layer Style>Bevel & Emboss. Set Style to Inner Bevel, Size: 25, Angle: 90, Altitude: 55.



Add final touches

04 Now change the ICE layer's Opacity to 70%. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All, grab the Brush tool (B) and mask the areas under each letter. Create a new layer, name it Snow and paint on top of each letter.



4. CUTOUT

The Cutout filter will simplify your image into levels of colour using information from the image. It looks for shapes to simplify and is great for creating posters. At lower settings the filter will create an abstract look; at higher levels it will create a painting-by-numbers look.

5. LIQUIFY

The Liquify filter is a great tool for retouching images or creating artistic effects. There are several tools in the Liquify dialog box; just grab one and hold down the mouse button or drag to push, pull, rotate, reflect, pucker and bloat the pixels of a determinate area. You can control the brush size, density and pressure to create subtle or drastic effects. The Liquify filter is an important tool and with a little practice is very easy to master.

THAW MASK TOOL

Make the freeze areas editable again using the Thaw Mask tool (D). Just grab the tool and paint over the freeze mask.

MESH

Using a mesh helps you see and keep track of distortions. To show a mesh, click the Show Mesh box in the View Options area.

Before

EXPERT TIP

Smart Filters

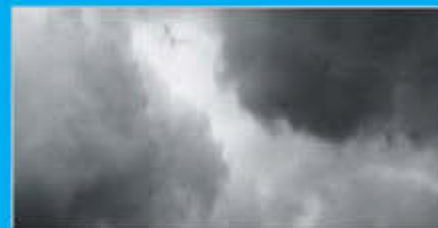
For the Creative Cloud users, the Liquify filter supports Smart Objects. The meshes are now automatically saved into a new document and can be edited at any time. Just convert the image to a Smart Object and then apply the Liquify filter.

TOOL OPTIONS

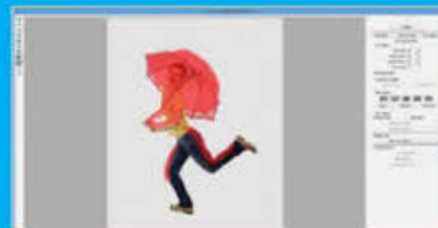
Change the settings in the tool options area to gain better control of each tool, making it easier to distort the images.

LIQUIFY TOOLS

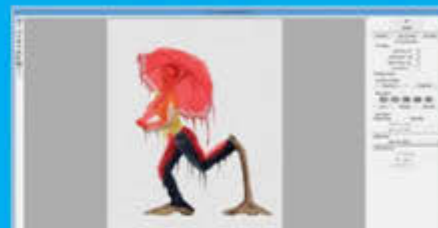
The Liquify filter enables you to create many beautiful effects and enhance any chosen portrait. We will guide you through four simple steps to give you a better overview of this great tool and what kind of imaging magic it can achieve.



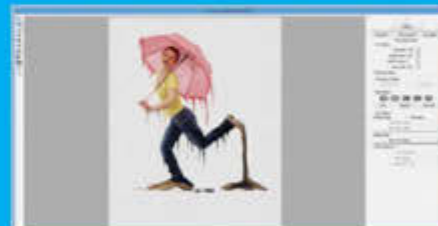
CREATE A BACKGROUND – Create a new file. Grab the Gradient tool, open the Gradient Editor, and choose the Black-white preset. Hold Shift and drag from top to bottom. Place 'Clouds.jpg'. Add a layer mask and paint to blend the bottom.



FREEZE MASK – Now go to File>Place 'Woman.png'. Resize and hit Return/Enter. Rasterize the layer and go to Filter>Liquify. Under the View Options, select Show Mask. Grab the Freeze Mask tool (F) and define the areas you want to keep intact.



FORWARD WARP – Now grab the Forward Warp tool (W). Set the brush Size to 35, Density to 100 and Pressure to 60. Start pushing the pixels around the trousers and shoes to create a melting effect. Increase the brush size if necessary.



RECONSTRUCT – Use the Reconstruct tool to restore the areas where the effect was too intense and click OK when you are satisfied with the result. Add other images such as the rain and ripples to enhance the composition.

6. TEXTURE

The idea of transforming a photo into a painting, without the need to actually paint it, is a popular project for digital artists. Part of that process is crafting a digital canvas to hold the faux-painted effect. Photoshop's Texture filter set contains a handy Texturizer feature that is perfect for creating a simple canvas texture. A bit of creative application and this filter can help create a convincing painted masterpiece in hardly any time at all.

EXPERT TIP

Create a paint effect first
Add a blank layer above the photo layer, set the Smudge Tool options to Sample All Layers and strength to 75%. Choose the Chalk brush preset. Trace the contours of the image. When done, combine both layers into a Smart Object and apply the texture.

CANVAS BACKING

The raw canvas texture is ideal for a painted image. Using the same settings in the filter ensures the texture aligns around the edges.

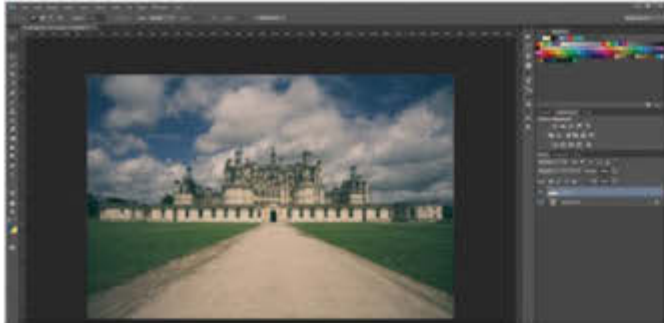


7. RIPPLE

Creating a reflection is an easy job when you use the Ripple filter. There are no surprises with this filter; it does what the title suggests, namely it will create a ripple effect on your image.

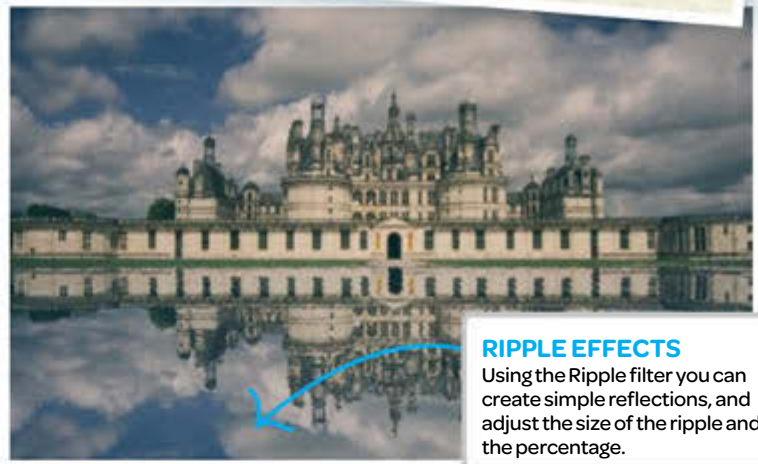
SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

By using a mask attached to the Smart Filter, you can control exactly where the texture is hidden and where it is the most visible.



Prepare your image

01 First, open the file 'Castle.jpg' and select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M). Make a selection of the castle, stopping just below the castle itself. Press Ctrl/Cmd+J in order to copy this selection to a new layer.



RIPPLE EFFECTS

Using the Ripple filter you can create simple reflections, and adjust the size of the ripple and the percentage.



Transform the layer

02 Go to Edit>Transform>Flip Vertical; this flips your layer so it's right for a reflection. Reposition the layer below the castle so it looks like a mirror image. Rename the layer Reflection.



Add some ripples

03 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Add a blur of about 2 pixels to remove some detail. Go to Filter>Distort>Ripple. Set the Amount to 100% and the size to large.



Blend it in

04 Create a new layer, use the Eyedropper (I) to select a blue from the sky. Fill the new layer with the blue colour and go to Layer>Create Clipping Mask. Set the Opacity to 15%.

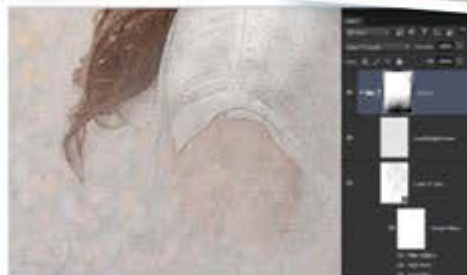
8. SKETCH

Tucked away in the Filter Gallery, you will find the Sketch filter set. This folder contains several different approaches to crafting a hand-drawn effect. These filters run primarily off reading the image contrast and some edge detection. They are frequently overlooked due to the mechanical nature of the results, but combining the right ones in a clever way can bring about some surprisingly beautiful results.



Stacked Filters

01 Combine several filters at once by using a Smart Object. Here the Smart Blur and High Pass filters are used to help isolate edges for the Note Paper sketch filter to create the effect.



Blending Modes

02 By changing the blending modes of the Smart objects, the background layers can show through. The dark areas were rendered with a Charcoal Sketch filter, then the overlay mode removed the grey background.



Adobe Paper Textures Pro

03 In the Window>Extensions menu there's a fantastic paper texture generator. Effortlessly create the perfect background for your sketched artwork.

9. GLOWING EDGES

As its name suggests, Glowing Edges looks for edges of colour and applies a glow. When used individually, this filter produces a neon outline effect. When used in combination with other filters and blend modes, this filter can help you achieve interesting image treatments like the one illustrated here.

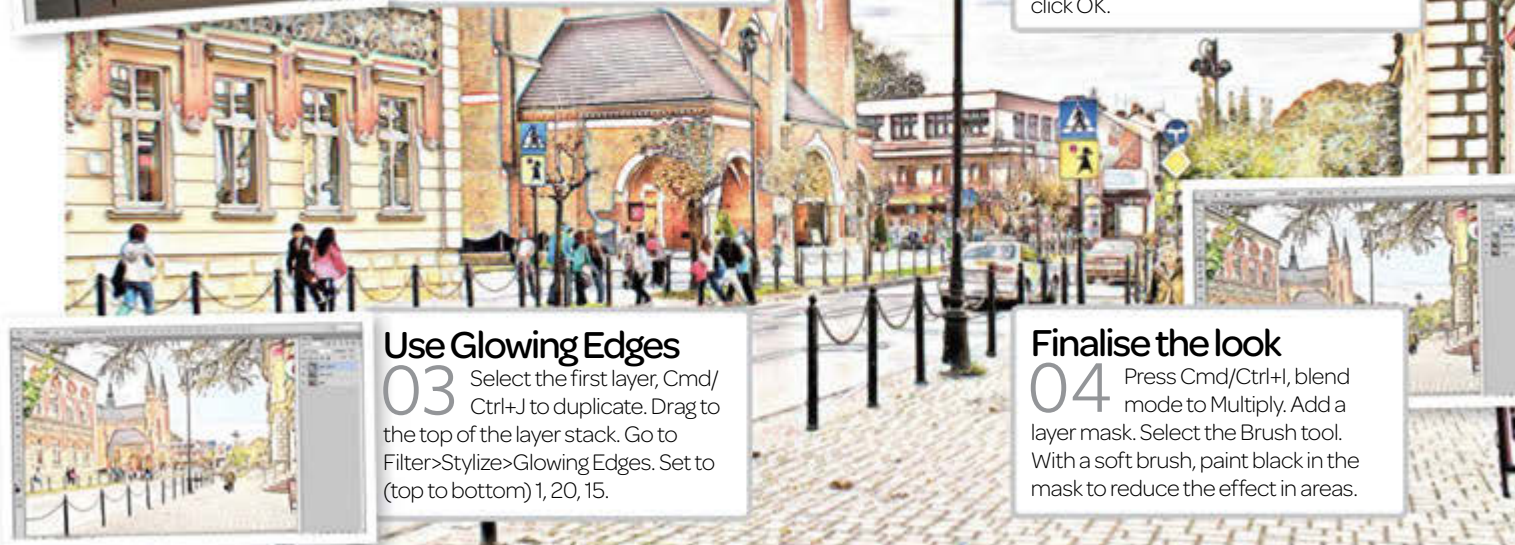


Duplicate & desaturate

01 Open your image and press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to quickly desaturate it. Drop the layer Opacity to 50%.

Blur and blend

02 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate. Bring back Opacity to 100%. Press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Set blend mode to Color Dodge. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Use 30px, click OK.



Use Glowing Edges

03 Select the first layer, Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate. Drag to the top of the layer stack. Go to Filter>Stylize>Glowing Edges. Set to (top to bottom) 1, 20, 15.

Finalise the look

04 Press Cmd/Ctrl+I, blend mode to Multiply. Add a layer mask. Select the Brush tool. With a soft brush, paint black in the mask to reduce the effect in areas.

CHANGE THE COLOUR

Add a gradient fill to easily change the colour of your image to one that is more suitable for a sunset scene.



Before

ADD LIGHTING EFFECTS

Add some lighting effects to create the colour tone of a sunset image. You can change the colours of the light to match your image.



Colour the image

01 We need to change the colour tone by going to Layer>New Fill Layer>Gradient. Choose a linear style with a colour of yellow to orange. Reduce the Opacity of this layer to 25%.

10. LIGHTING EFFECTS

The Photoshop Lighting Effects filter lets you create interesting light in your images. You can create three types of lights to enhance your images. The three lights you can create are Point, Spot and Infinite. You can use textures as bump maps to create 3D-like effects. The filter is great for defining your light source.

EXPERT TIP

Look at the shadows
Remember that the shadows in an image will help you find out where the light source is. On this image you can clearly see the shadows on the cliffs. If you were to place the sun on the opposite side, the image just would not work.



Make Smart Filters

02 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Set the black point to 25 and the white point to 240. Select all of your layers and go to Filter>Convert for Smart Filters.



Use the Lighting Effects

03 Go to Filter>Render>Lighting Effects. Change the Light Type to Point and the colour to a dark orange. Set the Intensity to 29 and use the green circle to increase the size. Create a smaller point light at the sun's location.



Mask the effect

04 Click on the filter blending options icon and reduce the Opacity to 80%. Paint with black in the layer mask anywhere you don't want the effect to be, probably on the left side.

SPOTLIGHT



The Spotlight option in the Lighting Effects filter is perfect for enhancing lights that are already in your image. All you need to do to incorporate it is to select the Spotlight option from the filter dialog and then overlay the light onto any existing lights that are in your scene.

INFINITE LIGHT

The Infinite option is great when you want to shine some light across an entire scene. This option is particularly good if you need to set up some lighting for 3D models within Photoshop. The lights act like a sun shining light in one direction. You can rotate the light in 3D space.



11. DISPLACE

The Displace filter is used to wrap textures or images around different shapes or surfaces. The filter creates a kind of mold to be applied onto another image. It works by mapping out the surface from a grayscale image, where the black-and-white areas create a subtle movement by shifting the pixels when applied to a second image. One element about this filter is the fact we need to create the displacement map first. We'll show you how.



BRIGHTNESS

The Displace filter works based on the brightness value of one file to distort the pixels in another file.

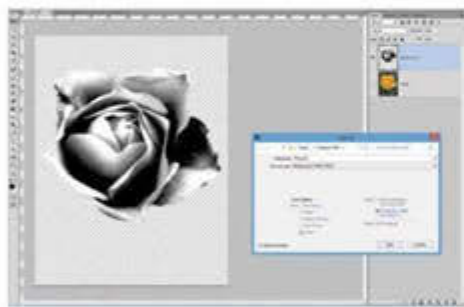
DISPLACE OPTIONS

The Horizontal and Vertical scale determine how much distortion the displacement map will create on the image.



Create the map

01 Go to File>Open 'Flower.jpg'. Grab the Quick Selection tool (W) and select the flower. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+U to desaturate. Open the Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and use to boost contrast.



Blur and save

02 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, set Radius to 5px and hit OK. Hide the flower layer and go to File>Save As Map.psd. Now go to File>Open Flower.jpg. Select and duplicate it again. Hit Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+U to desaturate.



EXPERT TIP

Use Channels

Create a displacement map using Channels. Go to Windows>Channel. Find the channel with contrast, open the drop-down menu. Choose Duplicate Channel. Change Destination>Document to New, call it Displacement Map and hit OK.



Apply the filter

03 Go to File>Place 'Texture.jpg'. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip. Change the blend mode to Soft Light. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace, set Horizontal/Vertical scale to 15, check Stretch to fit, Repeat Edge and click OK. Locate the saved Map.psd file and hit Open.



Isolate an element

01 Each element should have its own pattern to create the best effect. Begin by creating a copy of the base layer, selecting the elements and then using a layer mask to isolate one.



Posterized effect

02 The effect works best if the colour shades are posterized. Go to Filter>Filter Gallery and open the Artistic set. Use Poster Edges with the Edge Thickness and Edge Intensity at 0 and Posterization at 1.



Color Halftone

03 To create the halftone pattern, go to Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone. For the highly detailed areas use a Radius of 10 pixels. For less detailed, increase this number. Then enter different values for the channels 1, 2 and 3.



Black outline

04 Place a copy of the photo layer at the top. Go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Sketch>Torn Edges. Use a Smoothness of 15, Image Balance of 20, Contrast of 14. Set the layer blend mode to Multiply to allow the pattern to show through.

12. COLOR HALFTONE

The Color Halftone filter is a method of simulating the offset printing technique used by larger presses to create almost any shade, colour, or gradient by combining a series of dots created in the basic ink colours. This halftone pattern is obvious upon close inspection, but at a reasonable distance our eyes perceive the pattern as a single shade of colour.

Before

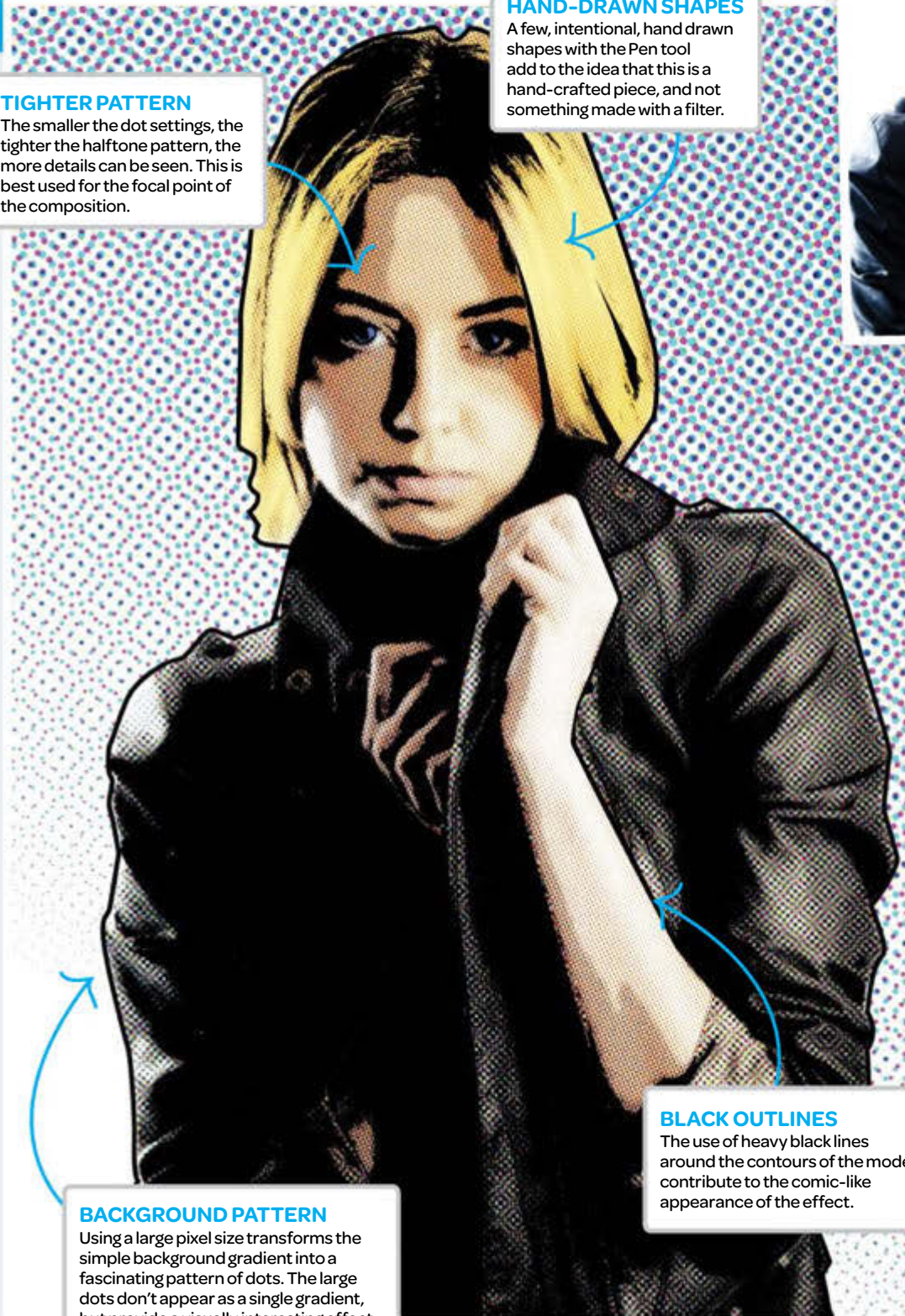


HAND-DRAWN SHAPES

A few, intentional, hand drawn shapes with the Pen tool add to the idea that this is a hand-crafted piece, and not something made with a filter.

TIGHTER PATTERN

The smaller the dot settings, the tighter the halftone pattern, the more details can be seen. This is best used for the focal point of the composition.



BLACK OUTLINES

The use of heavy black lines around the contours of the model contribute to the comic-like appearance of the effect.

BACKGROUND PATTERN

Using a large pixel size transforms the simple background gradient into a fascinating pattern of dots. The large dots don't appear as a single gradient, but provide a visually interesting effect.



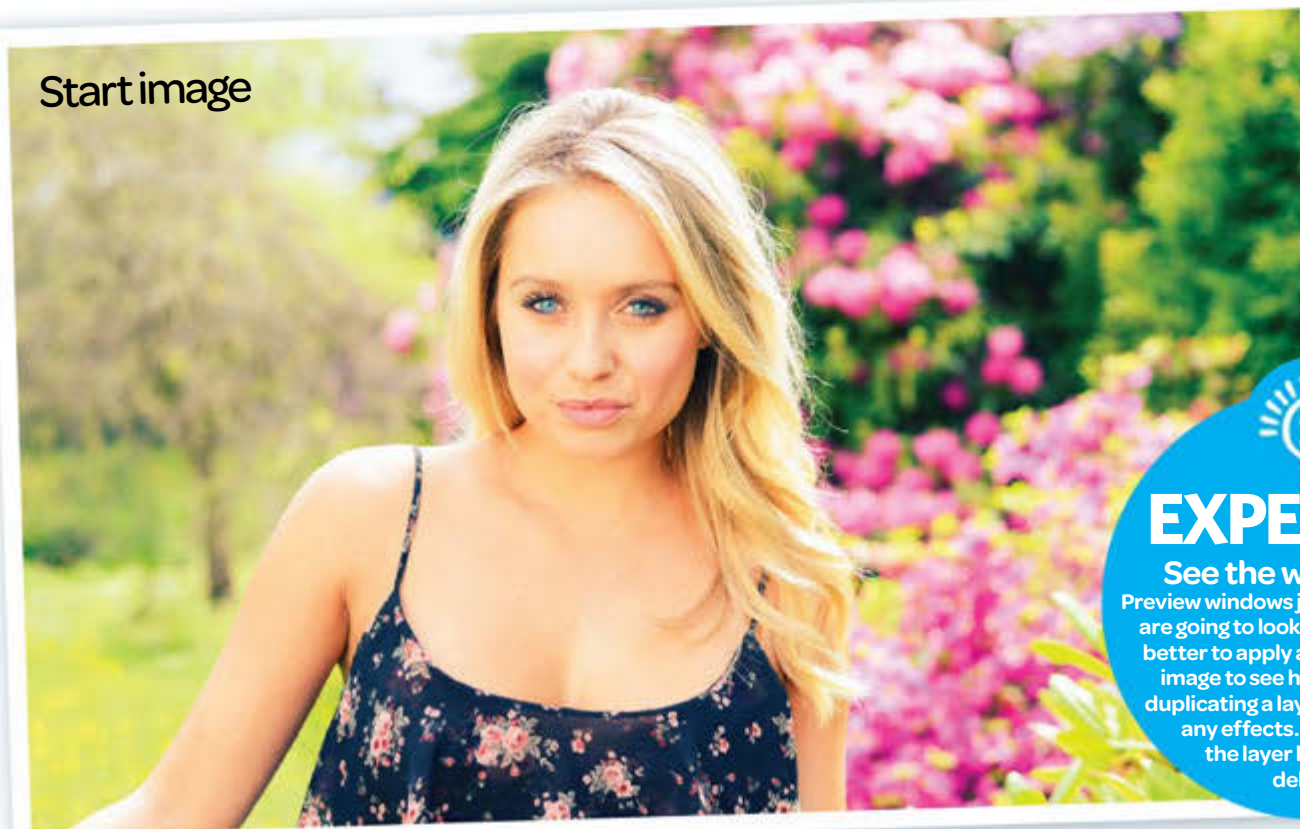
HOW THE FILTER WORKS

The Color Halftone filter can produce some great effects, but it is not very well explained in the interface. The settings control the size of the dots, and which direction each colour is offset from the base. So the Max Radius is the size of the dots (double the number to know the true size of the dots, or the diameter). Then each channel adjusts the direction of offset for the colour's dot. Experiment with these angles to produce different patterned effects. Be sure to only use channels 1-3 for RGB images, as there is no 4th colour channel.

PICK A FILTER

Take a look at the start image to the right, and then look at all of the effects below that can be achieved with the 12 filters you've learnt about throughout this feature. The artistic possibilities are endless!

Start image



EXPERT TIP

See the whole effect

Preview windows judge how your filters are going to look, but it's sometimes better to apply a filter to the whole image to see how it will look. Try duplicating a layer before applying any effects. If you don't like the layer later, you can delete it.



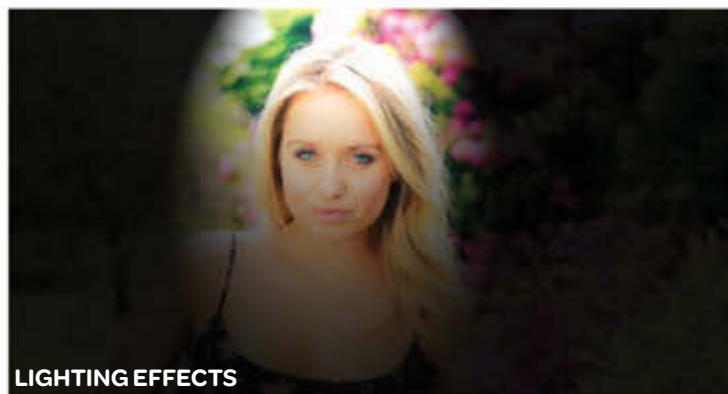
BLUR



RIPPLE



CUTOUT



LIGHTING EFFECTS

"Try duplicating a layer before applying any effects. If you don't like the layer later, you can delete it"



ARTISTIC EFFECTS

Have a go at experimenting with the Lighting Effects filter in order to see how lighting can be a source of artistic flair.

Start images



Explore the Lighting Effects filter

Make the most of the Lighting Effects filter by using it artistically

In many ways, lighting is an afterthought.

It's a footnote in lots of tutorials – not a glamorous filter, but the one that tidies up and brings a touch of realism to even the most outlandish compositions.

It is rare to see a Photoshop tutorial focus on how lighting can be a source of artistic flair within an image. The very nature of lighting dictates that it is purely there to cast a

spotlight on others, rather than be at the centre of attention itself. Which begs the question, in Photoshop, how often are the most rudimentary of tools fashioned into the most stunning creative effects?

The Lighting Effects Filter is this kind of tool. The Spot, Point and Infinite light can all be inspired effects to use, because they make use of darkness as much as light. Rather than

them just being tools for exposing, they are tools for toning and they can add focus and realism to an image.

In this tutorial, you will delve into how you can use each effect at the centre of a creative project and not just as an after-effect. Feel free to experiment and employ further effects at the end of this tutorial to enhance your image further.

Create an apple candle

Use the point light to throw focus on a surreal composition



Place the candles over the apple

01 Open the file with the apple and use this image as the base onto which you're going to place the candles. You can use any apple or candle pictures for this, as long as the flame is in focus and there is enough apple stalk to be on fire.



Screen and transform the candles

02 The great thing about using candles with a black background is that all you have to do is turn the blend mode to Screen and you've masked out most of the picture. Transform the candles image so the two layers align.



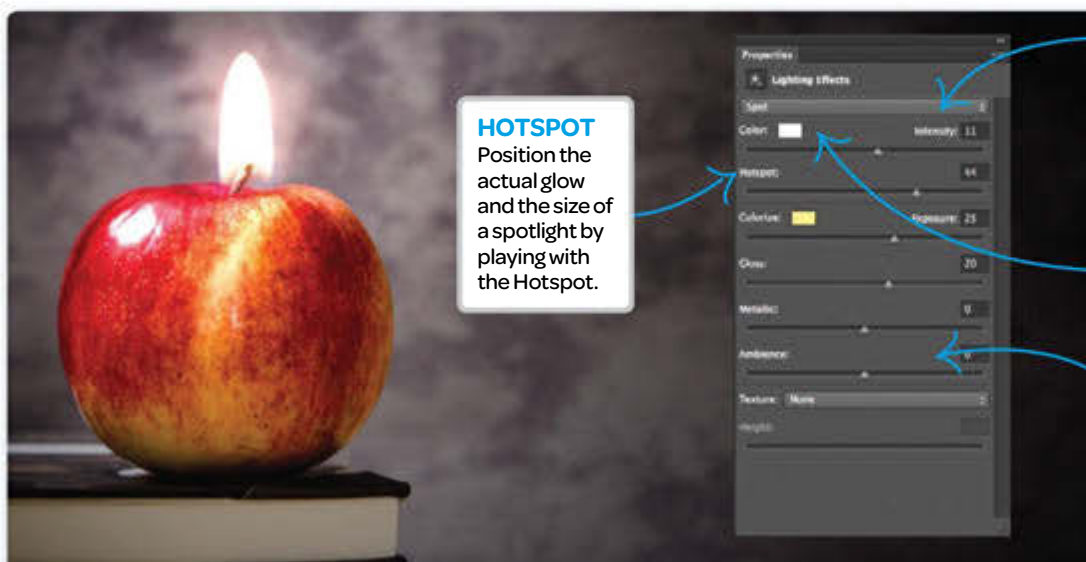
Mask out unwanted areas

03 Add a mask onto the candles layer and erase any other flames with a soft black brush. The aura around the main candle should remain, which may not appear very realistic, so you can now add a filter to enhance the look.



Add a Point light

04 Head to the Point option in the Lighting Effects filter and move the centre so it's over the candle's flame. Adjust the intensity until the exposure looks right. Now you'll have the effect of the candle lighting up the whole picture.



HOTSPOT

Position the actual glow and the size of a spotlight by playing with the Hotspot.

TYPE

Choose between the three types of lighting effect and even combine them in the one project.

COLOUR

White is the most common colour of light, but a light yellow works well, as do pastel colours for surrealism.

OTHER OPTIONS

Give other twists to your conventional lighting effects and mix and match unusual selections for unique results.

Create Spotlights

Convey an artistic limelight by exploring the power of lighting

The spotlight feature is often added to an image to subtly highlight a focal point, but what if you were to use it in a more obvious way?

There is perhaps no better tool to create a literal spotlight on a subject within your photograph edit than the spotlight feature, so by using it as a key part of your project, you will be able to create an inventive and effective composition.

Here we show you how to create an effective edit and use this really handy tool.

“Resize the subject to fit the background and make sure the perspectives of the two images match up”

THE SPOTLIGHT

The spotlight has been adjusted to bring the subject into focus and make her stand out.

Start image



Place the subject

01 Open up a background for the subject to be pasted onto and place the subject over it. Resize the subject to fit the background and make sure the perspectives of the two images match up.



Select and refine edge

02 Select the subject from the image using the Selection tool you prefer. Cmd/right-click and choose Refine Edge to smooth the selection. Use an eraser if necessary to remove any sharp edges.



Play with shadows

03 To add more realism, Cmd/right-click the layer and choose the Drop Shadow option, at a 90-degree angle to give the impression that light is falling from above. Experiment with distance, spread and size.



Duplicate and add spotlight

04 Duplicate your subject and background and merge the original two layers. Change the Intensity, the Hotspot, size and even colour until you're happy with the result.



Add floor light

05 With the background layer you've just duplicated, select an ellipse with the Elliptical Marquee and delete the rest of the layer. This is going to be the highlighted area of the spotlight hitting the floor.



Finish up

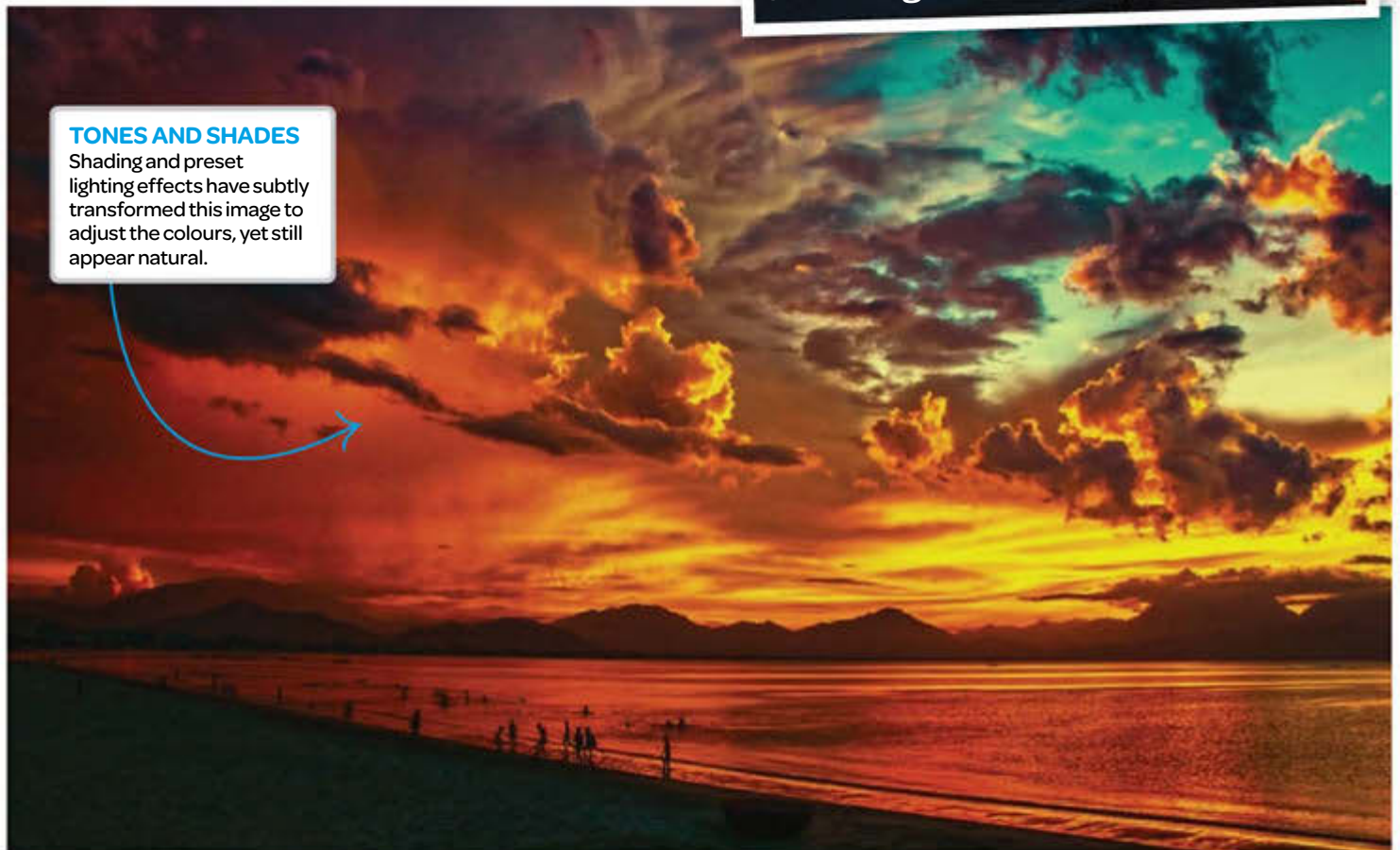
06 Change the Opacity of the subject and the floor light layer so that they don't stand out too much. You can tweak the picture by adding more lighting effects to accentuate the main spotlight.

Re-tone a sunset

Simultaneously shade and colour a picture with the Infinite Lighting effect

Adding a warming or cooling filter can be great, but can often flatten the tone of a picture. Gradients can make it difficult to find the exact colours. So by using the infinite lighting feature, you can add a splash of colour to a picture exactly where you like and still retain the natural light.

“Try to give the picture a natural exposure and remember that in the top left, there are preset lighting effects”



Select a colour

01 Pick a colour as you would with any other filter. Lighter colours work well and with the Lighting Effects, you can select the lighter and darker shades around your chosen Hue.



Change the angle

02 Turn the lever in the centre that resembles a satellite dish – you can move it in any direction. Turn it to cast light or shade anywhere in your picture. Revolve it so that it faces the light in the photo.



Experiment with intensity

03 Alter the dial in the centre to raise the intensity. Try to give the picture a natural exposure and remember that in the top left, there are preset lighting effects for you to choose or base your own effects on.

COLOUR

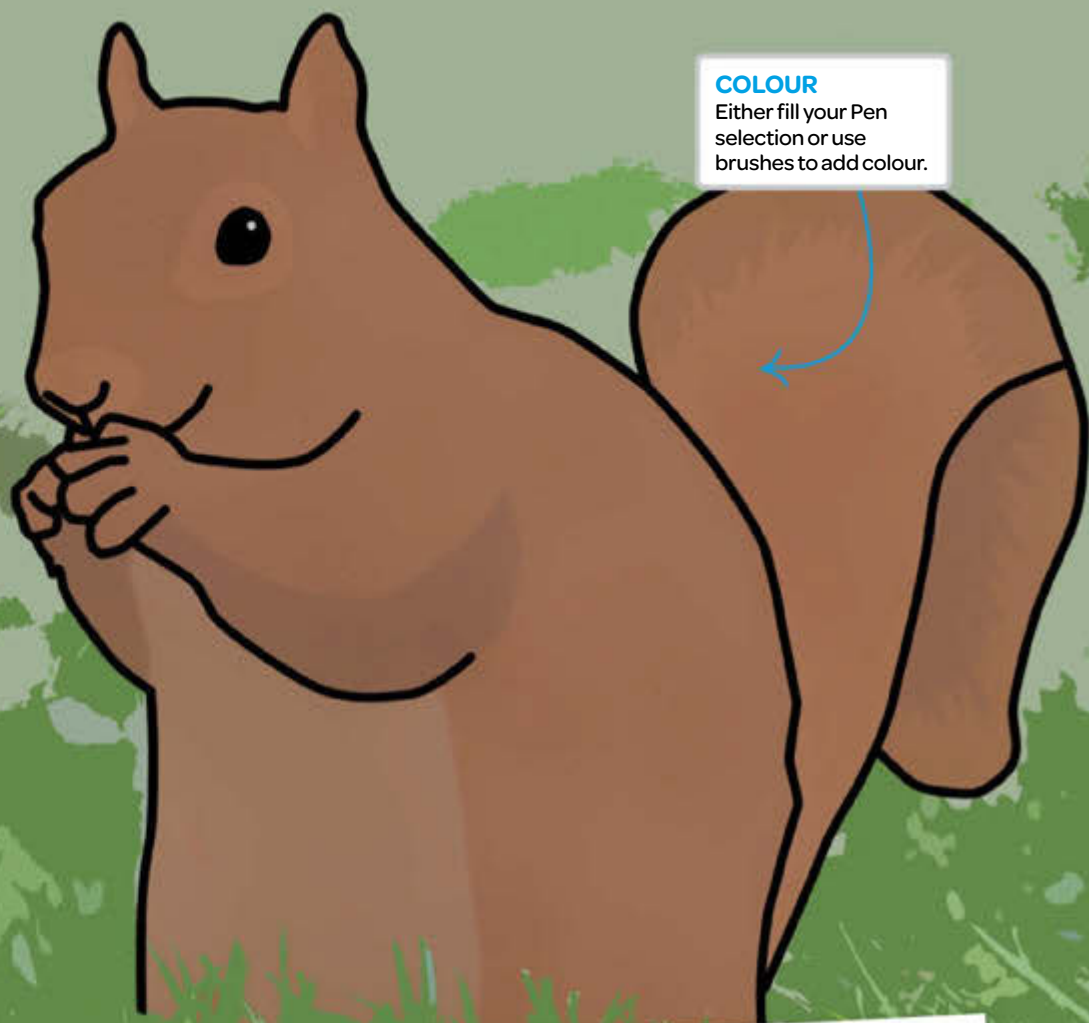
Either fill your Pen selection or use brushes to add colour.

CUTOUTS

Use the Cutout filter to reduce photos to cartoon-style blocks to draw around.



Source files available



Draw with the Pen tool

Get creative with the Pen tool for vectors, cartoons, selections and much more

Drawing may be one of the most soothing hobbies that anyone can enjoy, but it's notoriously difficult on computers. To start, scan your sketches into Photoshop. This is where the Pen tool comes in. As one of the most powerful weapons in an artist's arsenal, it's one of the few Photoshop tools that you can start from scratch with to build an image gradually. It works with simple clicks and drags, but what it lacks in complexity it more than makes up for in accuracy. Its pin-point precision makes it preferable to brushes when outlining an image. On top of this, it's more effective than a Lasso for selecting.

You don't need to be great at drawing when you have Photoshop. Simply paste the image that you want to draw around and use it as a guide, just like you would do using tracing paper manually. This is just one incredibly easy method of re-creating an image as a drawing in Photoshop, and there are hundreds of creative ideas to experiment with when using the Pen tool.

In this brief tutorial, we will delve into some of the most popular uses of the Pen tool, from light trails and cartoons, to basic shapes and selections, all of which will enhance your drawing skills.

Learn to draw

Three steps to becoming an expert artist with the Pen tool



Prime the Pen

01 First, create a new layer over your background. Set the brush's Radius to whatever outline size you want your Pen to have. Choose the colour of this outline by selecting a foreground colour. Now you should be ready to start drawing!



Click and drag

02 Click to create a point and create polygons. Try dragging so that you can create curved edges. The guideline shows the direction the Pen is angled towards. Play around with the tool and see what kind of curves you can find.

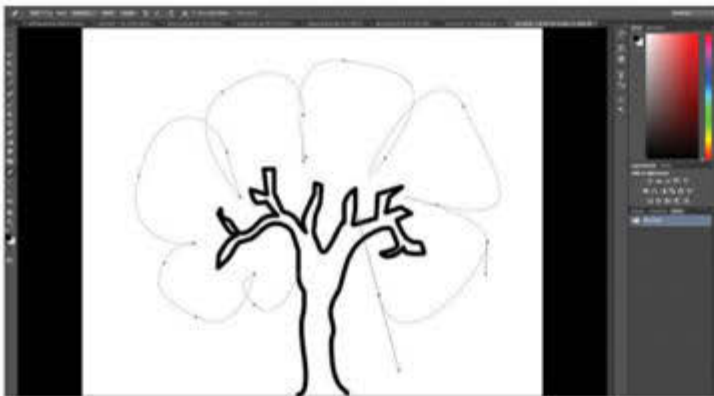


Fill and stroke

03 Once finished, click on the Paths tab, situated by the Layers and Channels tabs. Ctrl/right-click on the Work Path and pick between Fill or Stroke – the first one colours the shape in, while the latter draws along it.

Additional uses

The Pen can be a mightier tool than most



Basic shapes

The Pen is great for creating polygons. You can create unique shapes thanks to its control and precision and though you can easily fill them in, you can use the Pen to make outlines before brushing in colour.



Cartoon portraits

To create cartoons, simply find a photo and dial down the Opacity. Now trace over it on a new layer – follow the lines with the Pen, using the original as a guide. The end result is always great.



Light trails

Another common effect is the light trail, often seen on night-time images. Simply draw your line, Stroke it and head to Blending Options, before adding an Outer Glow for a vibrant-city effect!



Select with it!

It has the curves that the Polygonal Lasso lacks and the straight edges that the Magnetic Lasso can't manage. It's a very accurate tool. Simply Ctrl/right-click your Work Path to make a selection.

MIX METHODS

Combine smudging and dabbing to achieve a painterly effect, keeping detail areas, such as the eyes, nice and sharp.



Paint with the Impressionist brush

Release your inner painter with the Impressionist brush in Elements

Impressionism was invented because of an artist's limitations. As Claude Monet was going blind, he still continued to paint; the results were understandably blurry and indistinct, but they produced dazzling, technicolour results that captured enough imaginations to start a movement.

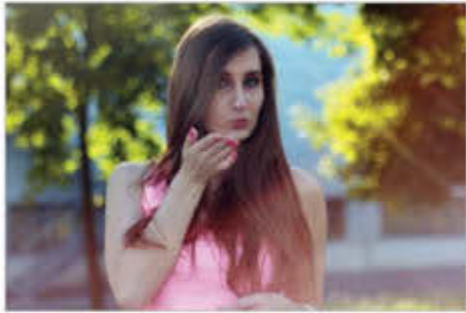
Likewise, the Impressionist brush in Photoshop Elements is there to combat the limitations of any budding digital painter. You can transform photos into stunning pieces just by brushing over them, and the tool gives you complete control when editing. But how do you wield the brush without creating a blurry mess?

The answer is one that can actually be found by studying Monet's work. The Impressionist brush is one that should be used delicately. In Elements, choosing the brush size is as important as knowing where to brush, and smudging can become as important as the actual painting. The transformation only begins with the brush strokes; much of the process is about smoothing edges and merging colours, in a similar way to how real-life painters smudge their work.

Let's look at three different photos and assess how the Impressionist brush can be used to turn all three into evocative digital paintings of which you can be proud.

A single portrait

Keep the focus in a painting by smudging and dabbing



Begin brushing details

01 Start off with a small brush and work on the eyes of your portrait. Brush the details of the face and get used to the tool. Choose the Dab option and try not to blur the picture too much yet, as the subject is the focus of the piece.



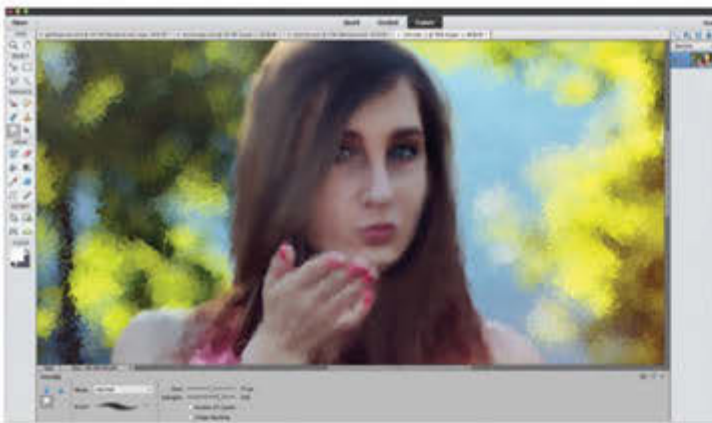
Build up brush strokes

02 Now start on the hair. Make your brush size a little larger for this, then work on the rest of the body and eventually the background. Experiment with different styles and use bigger strokes for less focus.

Expert tip

Study real Artists

All projects start with a little inspiration, but by examining the likes of Monet, Manet and Degas, you can get a good idea of what works. Search for Impressionist paintings, and decide on the approach you want; some works use more detail, while some focus more on the colour and the shapes in the picture. From here, you can discover a world of inspiration, and that's without touching on the post-Impressionist world.



Smudge the face

03 Select the Smudge tool and start smudging the hair more realistic look. Move on to the features of the face; follow the curves of the picture, and this will add more detail.



Brush and smudge more

04 Touch up the picture with more dabs and smudges. Try and get the right balance so your painting looks both smudged and painted. Use the Dodge tool on the eyes to whiten.



Bring out colours

05 Sort the colouring and contrast of the picture via the Enhance option. Impressionism works well with pastel and bright shades. For saturated pictures; select the subject and duplicate that part of the picture to stand out from the backdrop.



Touch up overall

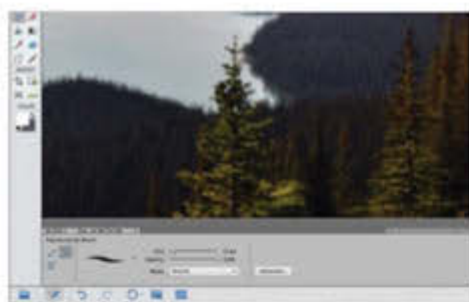
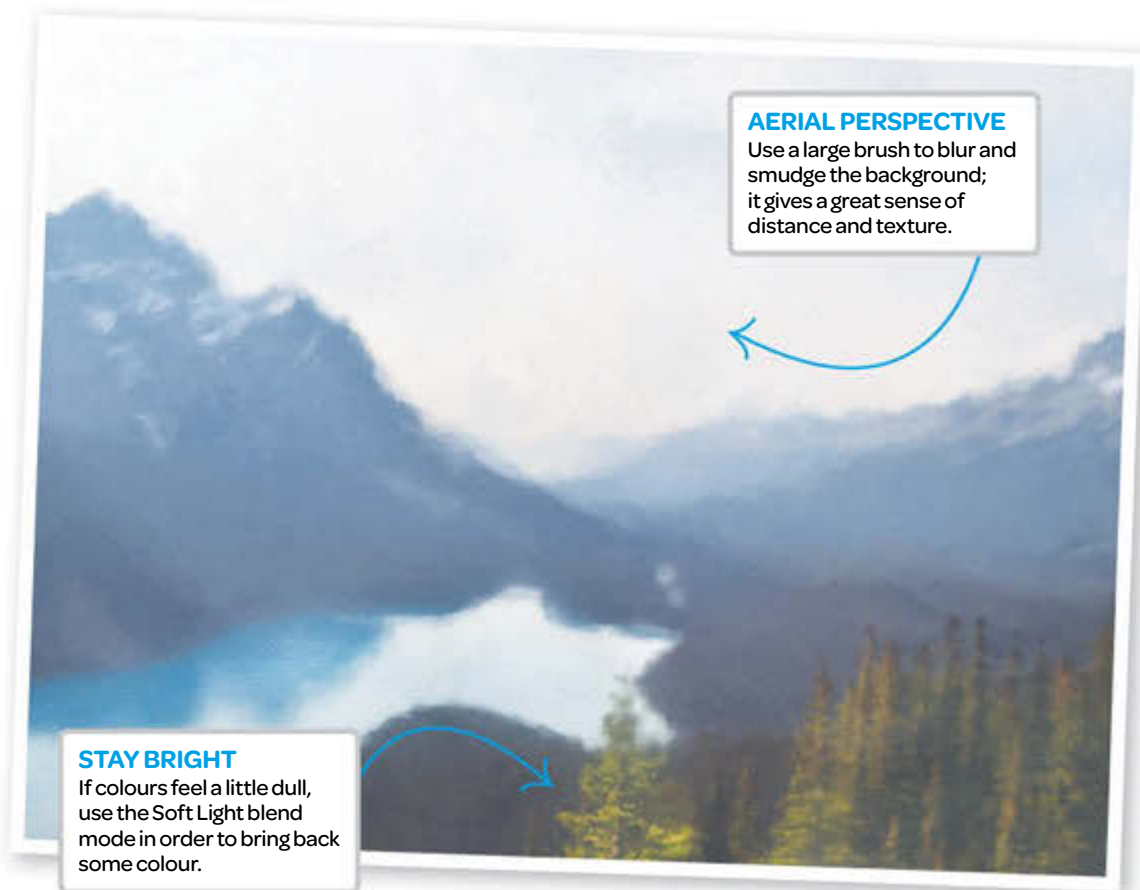
06 A nice final touch is to add an overlay effect; you'll find canvas and paint textures as free resources that can be pasted onto your picture with a Soft Light blend mode. These give the illusion of a real painting!

Natural landscapes

Create an idyllic, painted landscape using the same dabbing techniques

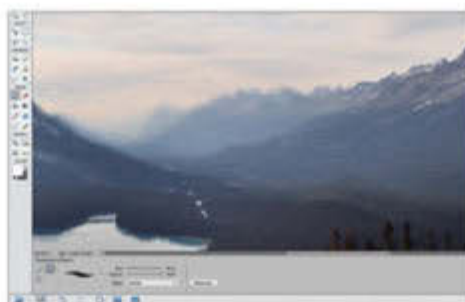
Landscapes might be easier than portraits to paint, but there's a similar fine line of deftness involved when it comes to bringing out the details in a scene. By following the same steps as portrait painting, you can re-imagine beautiful rolling hills as an oil-painted masterpiece; the trick, though, is in knowing where to apply the techniques on a larger scale.

"There's a similar fine line of deftness involved when it comes to bringing out the details in a scene"



Deftly paint details

01 We're going to focus on the details of this picture, particularly the trees and the edges of the mountains. Use a small brush and increase size as you move onto less focused parts of the image.



Build up brush size

02 Create aerial perspective by using a bigger brush in the far distance. When working on landscape pieces, this blurriness works well; in this case it looks foggy. Try tight medium brushes on the sky.

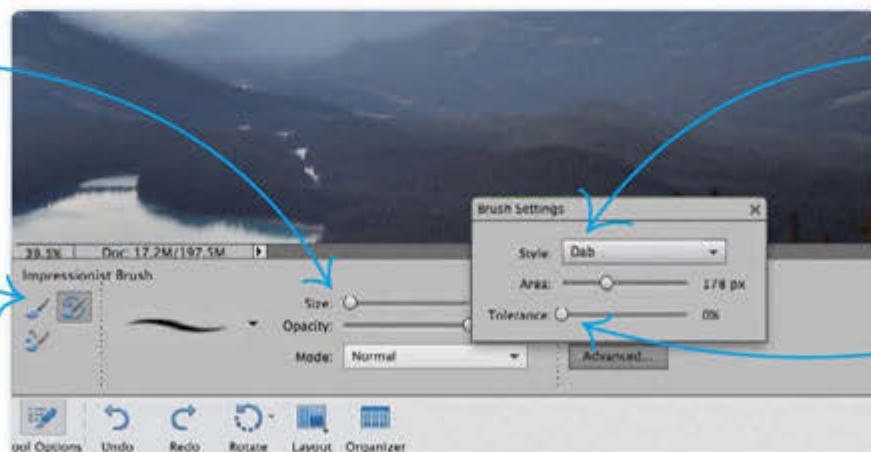


Adjust colouring & overlays

03 Then add a textured overlay; a new layer with a blend mode of Soft Light and Opacity of 50% to paint colour where needed. With Impressionism, brighter paintings often look more painting-like.

SIZE, OPACITY AND MODE
Choose how big and how prominent you want your brush to be with these trusty appearance options.

BRUSH
Select a soft brush for a true Impressionist feel, but experiment with various styles to collage your painting.



STYLE
Decide whether you want to paint with dabs, strokes or curls, and how big those strokes should be.

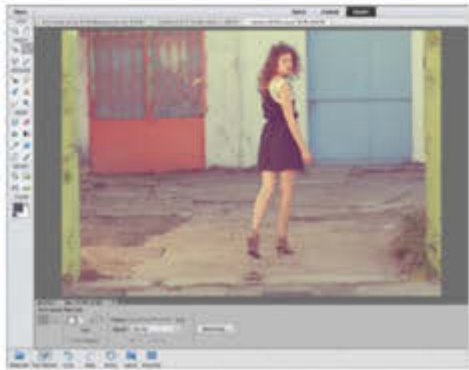
TOLERANCE
You can focus on a certain colour-based area when painting, but choose a Tolerance of 0% for full control.

Portrait and landscape

Incorporate the two painting techniques into one picture

Now we've covered how to create a portrait and how to shape a landscape, how about combining the two? It's not quite as simple as merging the two pictures together, as the focus of a photo with both a subject and a background is slightly different to the two pictures on their own. Let's assess the focus of a photo with both a strong foreground and background.

"It's not as simple as merging the two pictures together"



BACKDROP

Begin painting details in the background and increase the brush size as you go to establish depth of field.



Start image

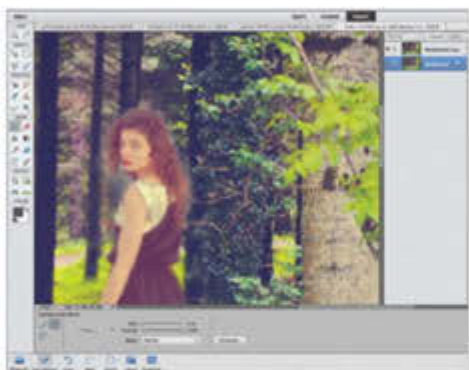


SUBJECT

Though the most focus must go on the subject, it doesn't have to be quite as detailed as with a portrait.

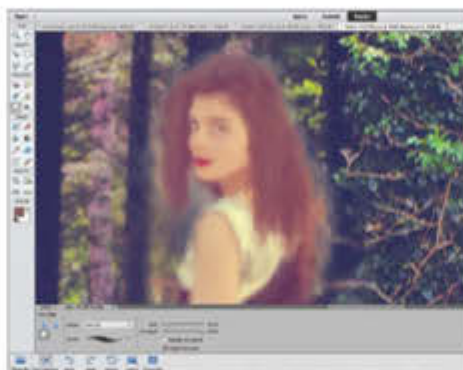
Paste the subject

01 Select your subject from its original photo using the Quick Selection tool and the Refine Edge tool. Paste them into the new picture and position them realistically into the piece. Adjust light if need be (Enhance>Adjust Lighting).



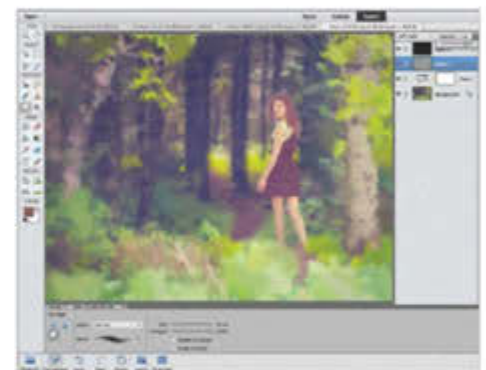
Merge and brush

02 Merge the foreground and the background together and begin dabbing details with the Impressionist brush. Remember that facial features aren't so important when the viewer's focus isn't solely on the foreground.



Smudge where necessary

03 We're not going to smudge the details of our subject's face too much in this picture, as she's sharing the focus with the backdrop. More extensive smudging can be made on the hair and the background of the picture, though.



Finish up

04 Once brushed completely, add overlays or filters and use bigger brush sizes to show focus in the picture. Big brushes work well in leafy paintings, and smaller brushes are good for adding detail to the trunks of trees.



Source files available

Learn to love the Liquify filter

Discover how the Liquify filter can be a fun and creative way to enhance your Photoshop creations

The Liquify filter isn't new to Photoshop, but over the years, Adobe has added new features that have really improved this tool, especially in the new CC version.

The Liquify filter allows you to make distortions by pulling, pushing and rotating the pixels. Here we will work on three different projects, each one covering the most

useful Liquify tools. You will learn to retouch photos, fix imperfections and create effects.

Working with Liquify requires practice. The brush settings will constantly change, and the key here is to use a large brush with low pressure and gentle strokes to apply effects.

This tutorial was created using Adobe CC. Depending on the version you are using, some of the tools described in the steps will

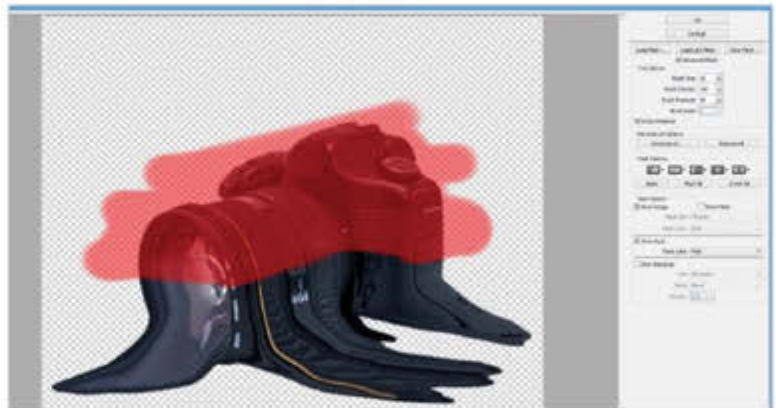
not be available, such as the Smooth tool. If you're using the early versions of Photoshop or Elements, you can use the Pucker tool to smooth things out by simply dragging around the edges to create an effect. So have a go and try this tutorial anyway, play with the tools that are available, and see how you can take full advantage of the Liquify filter to transform your photos.

Add melting effects Use Liquify to create a melting effect



Place the images

01 Go to File>Open 'Background.jpg'. Now go to File>Place 'Camera.jpg' and Rasterize the layer (Filter>Rasterize>Smart Object). Grab the Quick Selection tool (W) and select the Camera. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate it.



Start melting

02 Head to Filter>Liquify. Select the Freeze Mask tool and mask the top half of the camera. Grab the Forward Warp tool (W), set the brush Size to 250, the Density to 100 and the Pressure to 40. Push the bottom pixels out to create the effect.



Create a new layer

03 Add a New Layer under the Camera's layer. On the toolbar, select the foreground colour; use colour #0e131d. Choose a hard brush and paint the effect.



Clip the layers

04 Merge the layers, then place 'Texture.jpg' and clip the layers. Create a layer mask (Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All). Use a soft tipped brush to mask out the lens and some parts of the camera.



Place more images

05 Place 'Lava.jpg'. Drag the corners to resize, use the Warp mode to reshape and hit Enter. Set the blend mode to Screen. Rasterize the layer, open Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L), adjust the shadows and click OK. Place more images and clip the layers.

Create more composition

06 Place the 'Fire.jpg' and 'Smoke.jpg'. Use the handlers to resize and hit Enter. Change the blending mode to Screen, and on the Layers palette set the Fill to 45%. Place as many images as you want, to create a nice composition.

Add shadows and highlights

07 Click on the Camera layer and open a new layer. Name it Dodge and Burn. Change the blend mode to Overlay, check Fill with Overlay-neutral colour and click OK. Grab the Dodge and Burn tool and paint in shadows and highlights.

Retouch a portrait

Use the Liquify filter to retouch photos



Find the Liquify filter

01 Open 'Portrait.jpg'. Duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and go to Filter>Liquify. Grab the Forward Warp tool (W) and select the Advanced Mode. Set the Size to 250, the Density to 80 and the Pressure to 20. Check the Stylus Pressure if using a graphics tablet.



Retouch the face

02 First we will retouch the face. Place the brush cursor adjacent to the edges, click and hold down and with short and gentle strokes, start pushing the pixels inwards to make the face thinner.



Smooth the edges

03 Use the Smooth tool (E) to help smooth out the irregular edges. Change the brush Size to 200, Density to 40 and Pressure to 20. Place the brush cursor over the face's contour, then click and drag the cursor around the face.



Retouch the nose

04 Grab the Forward Warp tool (W) and set the brush Size to 200, Density to 80 and Pressure to 20. Use the Zoom tool (Z) to magnify the image, and start pushing the sides of the nose inwards to make it thinner.



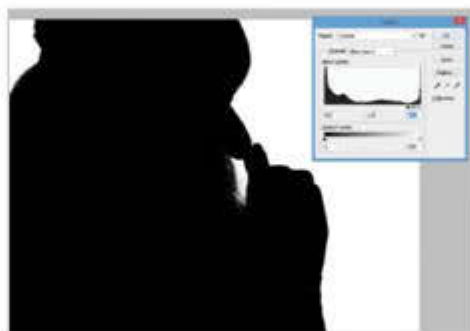
Make the eyes bigger

05 Grab the Bloat tool. Set the brush Size to 300 and the Density to 50. Place the brush cursor over the eyes and click twice to make the eyes a little bigger. Then click OK.



Add extra touches

06 Create a new layer. Name it Dodge and Burn. Set the blend mode to Overlay, check Fill with Overlay-neutral colour and click OK. Grab the Burn tool, set the Range to Midtones and the Exposure to 30% to paint the lips and 50% to paint the iris.



Create an Alpha Channel

07 Merge all. Duplicate the blue channel (Windows>Channels), increase the contrast and then Dodge and Burn slightly. Set the Range to Highlights/Shadows, the Exposure to 100% and paint over black/white areas.



Add finishing touches

08 Select the RGB channel and press F7. Go to Select>Load Selection, choose the Blue Channel, copy and click OK. Press Delete to get rid of the background. Now go to File and Place 'Park.jpg', behind the Portrait layer to create a composition.

Create a caricature Get more creative with Liquify



Paint over the features

01 Open 'Boss.jpg'. Select the image and hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate it. Go to Filter>Liquify. Use the Freeze Mask tool (F), set the brush Size to 200, Density to 50, Pressure to 100, and paint over the eyes, nose and ears.



Push the pixels

02 Select the Forward Warp tool (W). Set the brush Size to 300, Density to 80 and Pressure to 20. First, push the forehead inwards and then push the whole head to make it smaller. Use short strokes and change the brush size.



Reshape the chin

03 Start working on the neck and chin. Gently push the pixels outwards. You may need to increase the brush size and pressure to work on the areas around the shoulder and neck. Use the square brackets to increase and decrease the brush size.



Use the Thaw Mask tool

04 Erase the Freeze Mask using the Thaw Mask tool (D). Use the Forward Warp tool to push the pixels and make the ears bigger and the cheeks wider. The square brackets will alter the brush size.



Stretch the nose

05 With the Forward Warp tool, push the pixels to stretch the nose and make it wider. Grab the Pucker tool, set the brush Size to 200. Place the cursor over the eyes and click to make them smaller.



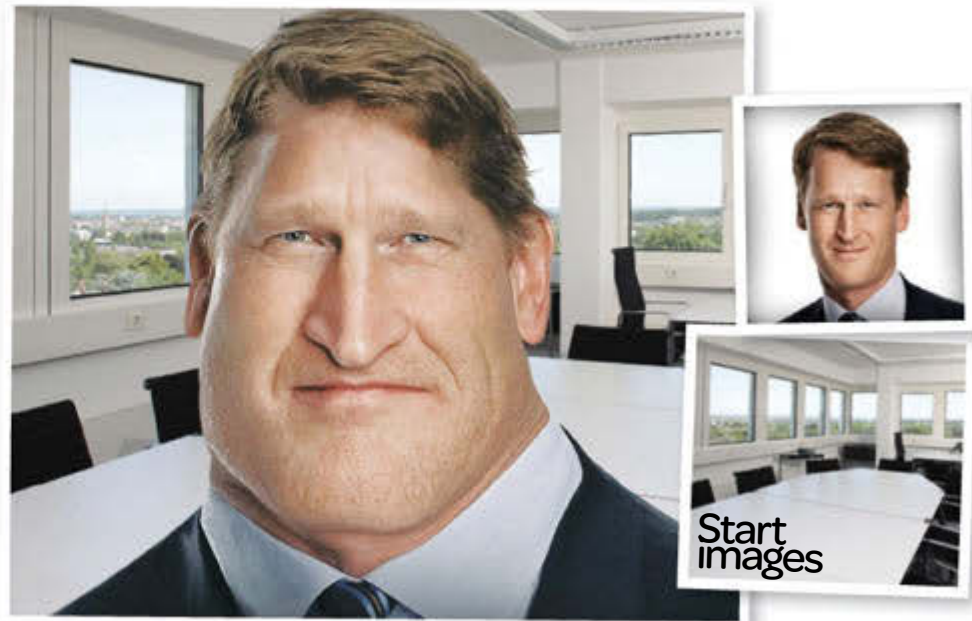
Bring the details back

06 Select the Smooth tool (E) to restore details. Set the brush Size to 100 and drag the edges. Vary the brush size and drag it over areas where the pixels are damaged. Click OK.



Set the scene

07 Duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J). Change the layers' blending mode to Overlay. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass, set the Radius to 2 px and click OK. Then go to File>Place 'Office.jpg'.



GO FOR BLOCKS

Use the Magic Wand to pick out blocks of colour and your selections will be quick and effortless.

Source files available



Wield the Magic Wand tool

Know when to use the simplest of tools, and select with ease

The Magic Wand is one of the most intuitive tools that Photoshop or Elements can offer; the clue is in the name. We expect it to just know exactly what we want selected.

The reality is that many find the Magic Wand doesn't offer much flexibility. Most people prefer the Quick Selection or a Lasso, and the Wand gets ignored. Is it too simple for complex selecting jobs?

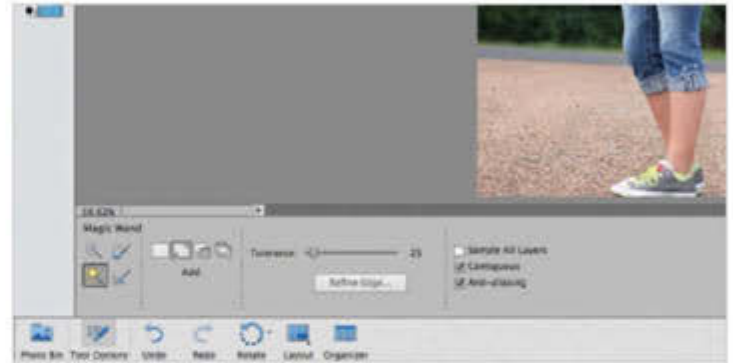
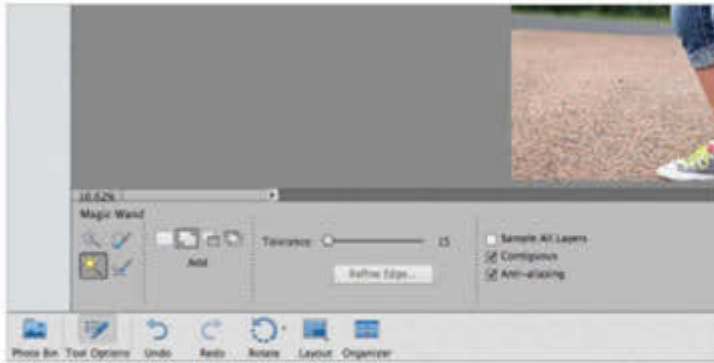
The trick is to match the tool to the right situation. What the Magic Wand does perfectly is select a block of colour. It's even quicker than a

Quick Selection if you want to locate a certain shade in a picture, and by understanding how to set the Tolerance, you can learn to select even more or less than ever before. You'll be surprised at how accurate such a speedy tool can be.

The Magic Wand is often just the beginning of an editing process. It's the starting point for a big subject selection, or it's a marker to search for similar colours in a picture. Let's look at the basics of the tool, and find out exactly what the Magic Wand can conjure up.

Select by magic

Make or prime the perfect selection with the Magic Wand



Select the tool

01 Select the Magic Wand tool from the icon on the left-hand side of Elements, or Photoshop if you're using it. Make sure you tick Contiguous and Anti-alias before you start selecting. Decide on what you want to select; the Magic Wand works best on block colours.

Set the Tolerance

02 Tolerance refers to how your selection reacts to the colours around it. If the Tolerance is low, the Magic Wand will select specific shades of colour; if the Tolerance is high, it will select similar colours around the selection. Set a low Tolerance for accuracy.



Point and click

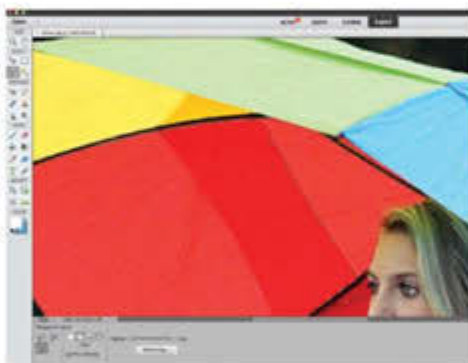
03 Simply click on the object you wish to select in the picture: it really is that easy! The Magic Wand works best when there's a specific colour that you wish to select, as opposed to the Quick Selection tool that selects whole objects, but neither tool is perfect.

Add and subtract

04 Use the Add and Subtract icons at the bottom of the screen to perfect the selection you have made. They are useful for selecting similar shades so that you can get the shape of an object rather than just the main colour of it.

Work with the Wand

Which other selection tools can I use with the Magic Wand?



Lassos

There are more accurate tools than the Magic Wand that can finish a job. By using the Wand first, you need only touch the edges with the Lasso tool!



Selection Brush

The Selection Brush is good at covering the corners that the Magic Wand missed out. Simply select the width you'd like, and use it as you would any other brush.



Quick Selection

The Quick Selection tool might be imprecise when you're in a hurry, but that doesn't mean it can't improve a Magic Wand selection. Just drag to selection.



Stylise with gradients

Use the Gradient tool to make your portraits stand out from the crowd

You can learn how to add a creative twist to your portraits by replicating a gel lighting effect in Photoshop. Gel lighting can be achieved in the photo studio using a flash, which is covered by coloured gels. However, this technique can be complex if you want more than one colour hue, and it is hard to control the end result. In Photoshop however, you can get this effect using gradients, which can be customised with colours and adjusted in shape and size to suit your shot.

For the best results you'll need a good start image. A black-and-white, high-key studio

portrait works particularly well, as the gradient will only attach to the midtones and shadow areas in the shot. If you're shooting your own start image for the tutorial, ensure you're working in well-lit, neutral space. Use flash to fill in dark shadows and don't be afraid of blowing out the highlights.

Then you can follow our 14-step guide below, as we show you how to enhance the high-key effect with Curves, and convert the entire image to black and white. You will discover how to apply and customise a gradient in just a few easy-to-follow steps. Let's get started!



Crop closer

01 Open your high-key image in Photoshop and crop in close. Click on the crop tool in the tools palette and select the entire image. Now hold Shift, to constrain proportions, and drag up one of the corners. Reposition and hit enter.

Enhance the highlights

03 Now heighten the high-key effect using the Curves tool. Select Curves from the bottom of the layers palette, and add two anchor points at either end of the diagonal line. Now pull the top anchor point to the left to brighten the highlights.



Convert to black and white

02 To ensure the effect shows, select Black & White from the 'Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer' tab at the bottom of the layers palette. Adjust the colour sliders in the dialog box to enhance the tonal contrast in the conversion.

"A black-and-white, high-key studio portrait works particularly well, as the gradient will only attach to the midtones and shadow areas in the shot"

Expert edit

Black & white adjustment



Select Lighten preset

01 Open your colour capture and select the Black & White adjustment tool from the layers palette. In dialog box, select Lighter from the drop down menu to start.



Highlight the skin

02 Lighten the skin tone by slowly dragging the Reds slider to the right. Don't go too far here or you'll start to lose the texture of the skin and definition in the facial features.



Define the eyes

03 Do the same with the Yellow slider as you did with the Red. Bring out definition in the eye area by pulling the Cyan and Blue sliders towards the right.



Darken the lips

04 Push the Magenta slider slightly to the left to darken the lip area. Adjustments to each slider will vary depending on the lighting and colours in the original capture, so work slowly.



Lighten the shadows

04 To lighten the shadows, select the bottom anchor point and slowly pull it towards the left. This will help to reduce the contrast in the capture, so that the gradient you add next will have a more noticeable effect on the entire image.



Add a gradient layer

05 You can now select Gradient from the 'Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer' tab in the layers palette. To adjust the gradient type and the colours, double click on the Gradient within the dialog box to bring up the Gradient Editor.



Select a preset

06 Once the Gradient Editor opens, you will be able to select a gradient type from the Presets menu. A gradient with at least two or three colours works really well for this sort of effect. You can also load and preview other gradient effects via the arrow icon above the Presets menu. So experiment with different effects to get what you want!



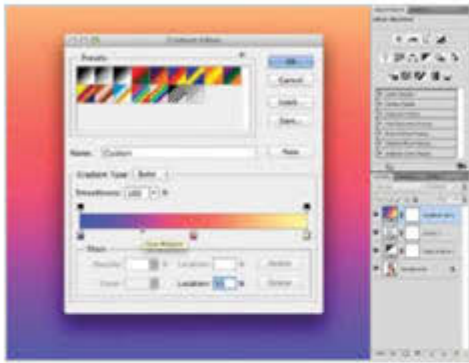
Customise the colour

07 Ensure the Gradient Type is set to Solid and the Smoothness is set to 100%. You can also change the colours in your gradient by double clicking on one of the colour arrows below the gradient preview. Simply select your preferred Hue from the Color Picker box.



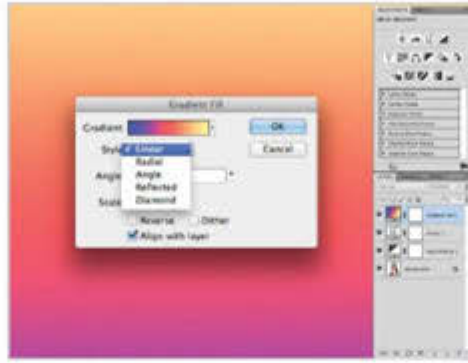
Select a different hue

08 It is possible to change each colour within the gradient using the same process and the Color Picker dialog box. Just make sure that the colours complement each other so that they blend together within the gradient.



Adjust the blend

09 You can also adjust the position of colours if you want some tones to appear longer in the gradient. Move the colour arrow left or right, and then adjust the colour midpoint dots either side for a smoother blend with the hues on each side.



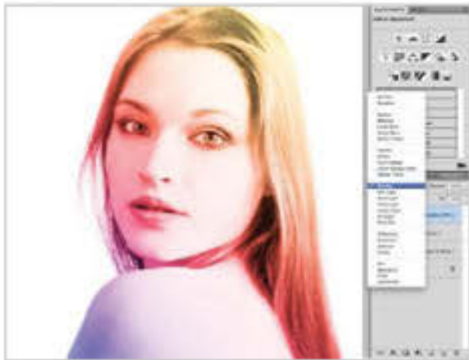
Select a linear style

10 Once you're happy with the gradient type and colours, click OK. Now adjust the style of gradient. For a subtle blend, select Linear from the drop-down menu. You can always change this later by double clicking on the gradient layer again.



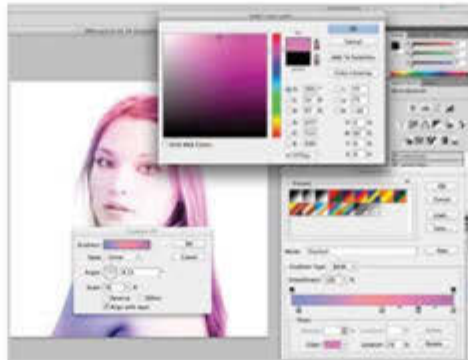
Change the gradient angle

11 Now adjust the angle of the Gradient to around 45°, which will help ensure the full gradient appears over the model. You can also reduce the scale of the gradient if you've chosen one with multiple colours and want them all to appear. Then click OK.



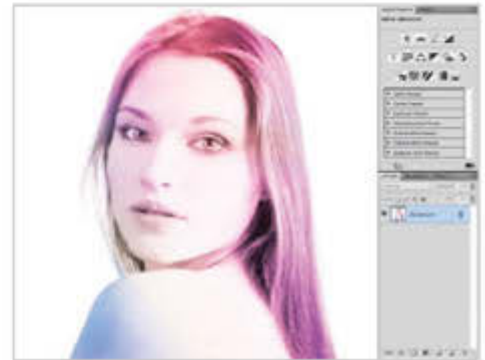
Blend the layer

12 To blend the gradient over the black-and-white image, you'll need to click on the gradient layer and select Overlay from the layer blending mode menu at the top. You can reduce the gradient's strength by adjusting the opacity slider.



Tweak the results

13 If the angle, position or style of the gradient isn't working, double click on the gradient layer and tweak the settings. You can add another colour via the Gradient Editor box. Simply click between two existing colour arrows to add another colour.



Flatten layers and save

14 Once you're happy with the final results of your creative gradient blend, you'll need to flatten all of the working layers by going to Layers>Flatten image. You can now Save or Print your artwork via the File menu.

CHANGE THE COLOUR

Double-click on the new colour point in the Gradient Editor to bring up the Color Picker box. Here you can select the colour you want to add to the gradient.

ADD ANOTHER HUE

To add another colour to your gradient, click between two existing colour points on the gradient and a new customisable colour point will be added.

Closer look Adjusting the gradient

Add colours to a gradient

SAVE YOUR GRADIENT

Once you've created your custom gradient, name and save it with the Gradient Editor box. You can use it again on future projects, as it will be located in the Presets menu.

CONTROL THE WIDTH

By moving one of the colour midpoints, you can control the width of the new hue in the gradient, and determine how smoothly it blends with the colours on each side.

CLONED OUT

Remove unwanted areas easily by using basic settings.



Source files available



Start image

Conquer the Clone Stamp tool

Stamp your authority all over an image with this intelligent brush

Cloning is one of the most time-consuming, patience-testing tricks that you can master in Photoshop, but like most things that require skill and effort, the results can be stunning.

Cloning is often used as a touch-up tool for photos, as it brushes over an image, using the original as a basis. It relies on the Opt/Alt key; press on whatever you want to be your guide, and then brush away, replacing an area with another part of a photo. It can be used to heal blemishes or even just face-swap. It's simple enough to learn, but there

can be hours spent touching up your photos once you've mastered how to use the stamp.

Sure, it might take so much precision that you wonder halfway through: would it be quicker to just set this sheep free from the field, and photograph it again without the fence in the way? However, in the end, there are few things more satisfying in Photoshop than completing a masterful clone. Read on and learn some techniques and ideas to turn you into a cloning pro.

Cleanly delete obstructions Erase fencing and more by cloning it out

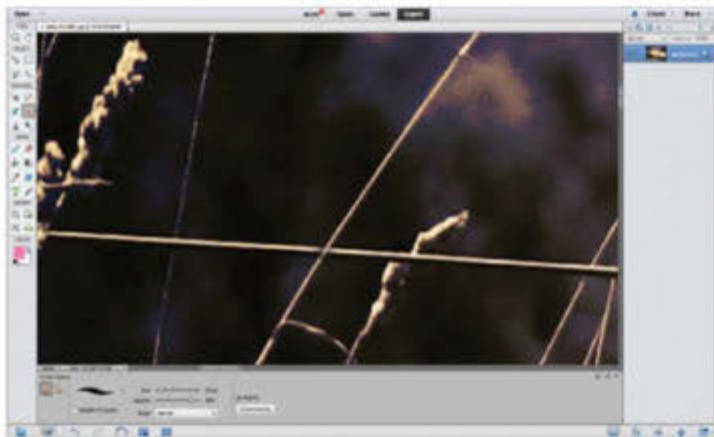


Familiarise yourself with settings

01 You can change the Brush, Size and Hardness, and there's an option to align or clone. Choose 50% Opacity and a soft brush. This will allow you to touch up and be more accurate.

Begin cloning

02 Press Opt/Alt+click to select the patch you want to duplicate. Then brush over your chosen area. Remember to choose an area of a similar tone and colour.



Clone strands

03 When cloning strands like hair or grass, make sure you clone them specifically. Never clone up to the edge of subjects or strands, because then you create soft and unbelievable edges.

Watch for duplication

04 To clone believably, make sure you don't leave obviously cloned parts of the image. If you've cloned a patch, clone over the original spot, otherwise the effect becomes obvious.

Additional uses Create a composite with the Clone tool



Clone whole forests

Trees can be hard to select, but why let that stop you creating a forest? Simply clone one tree all over the picture by adding a new layer for each one.



Swap fur texture

You can clone between pictures. Simply set the Opt/Alt option on one picture and then clone it onto your destination. You can create incredible effects.



Novelty effects

Rather than duplicating a photo, set a mask and brush through the mask. Then clone with a big soft brush and you can create quick yet effective novelty features.



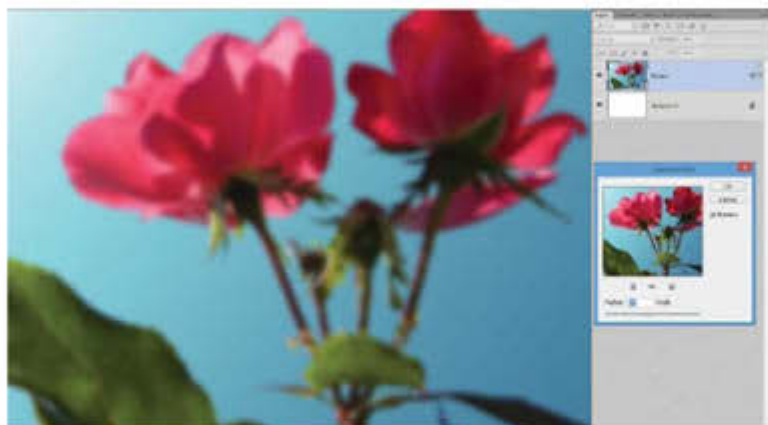
Have fun with the Warp tool

Learn new tricks to create fantastic effects using the Warp tool and basic commands

When it comes to creating unexpected effects in Photoshop, we often think about filters and layers styles, but there are so many tools and techniques that can be applied in different ways, creating the most imaginative and unusual effects.

In this tutorial we are going to take a look at the Warp tool and the warp presets to create a hybrid beetle, both in the car sense as well as the insect sense. The Warp tool is ideal to map objects to curved surfaces and is easy to control; just push or pull the corner anchors

and meshes to create the effect. Although the Warp tool is easy to master, this tutorial is a bit more challenging. In order to create the effect you'll need to cut the car into pieces, reshape it and then 'stick' it back together. There are many layers and you'll need to merge some of them and duplicate others, which can be a little confusing, but don't worry, just follow each step closely and you will be able to re-create this tutorial and learn new skills to use in future projects. Download the PSD file and the start images from the FileSilo and have some fun.



Set the background

01 Create a new document. Go to File>New (Cmd/Ctrl+N). Name it Bug_car, set the Width to 460mm, Height to 310mm and Resolution to 300. Click OK. Now go to File>Place 'Flowers.jpg'. Resize the image and hit Return/Enter. Go to Filter>Blur> Gaussian Blur, set Radius to 25px and hit OK.



Place the ladybug

02 Go to File>Place 'Ladybug.png'. Resize to 160% and hit Return/Enter. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Smart Object. Grab the Magic Eraser tool (Shift+E), set Tolerance to 20, uncheck the Contiguous box and click on the background to erase it. Zoom in (Z). Grab the regular Eraser tool (Shift+E) and rub out the irregular edges.



Place the car

03 Go to File>Place 'Car.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Grab the Pen tool (P) and create a path around the rear fender. On the toolbar click Make Selection, leave the Feather Radius at 0 pixels, check Anti-aliased and click OK. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the selection, name it Rear Fender.



Select each part

04 Now repeat the last step and select each part of the car. You'll place each part in its own layer and name it accordingly. Grab the Pen tool and create a path around the hood, front fenders, bumper, door and roof. Make a selection, duplicate it and name each layer.

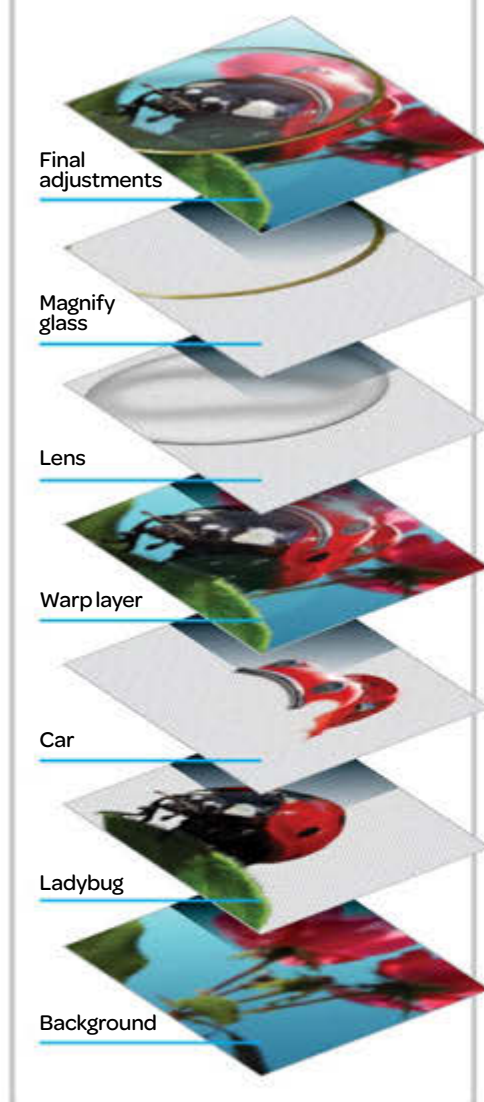


Select and resize layers

05 Delete the Car layer. Hold down Shift and select all the layers with car parts. Open the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T). Hold down Shift and drag the corner handle to scale proportionally. Now move it over the ladybug.

Layer structure

A breakdown of the process



Use the Warp tool

06 Select the Door_roof layer (click the visibility icon in order to hide the content for the other parts). Next, go to Edit>Transform> Warp or hit Cmd/Ctrl+T. Drag the anchor points and mesh segments in order to distort the image. Try to follow the curves on the ladybug's wing and reshape the car over it.



Warp each part

07 Warp the other car parts. Try to create a nice shape; you have to rely on your eyes to create the effect. You may need to warp the image more than once. You can also add a layer mask to hide unwanted areas and change the layer order if needed.



Merge and duplicate

08 Hold down Shift, select all parts of the car. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. Duplicate the merged layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J), name it Colour. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Check Colorize, set Hue to 0, Saturation to 85 and Lightness to 0. Click OK.



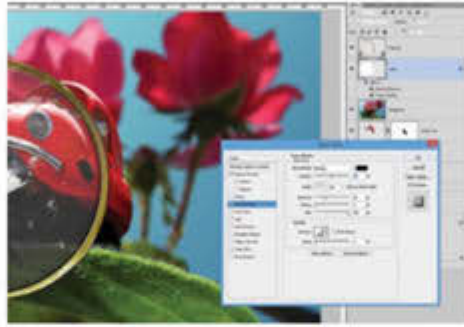
Add a layer mask

09 Keep the Colour layer selected and add a layer mask (Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All). Grab a soft tip black brush and paint over the windows, bumper, mirror and lights to show the chrome areas underneath. Select the Car and Colour layers and hit Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge.



Create a snapshot

10 To blend the car and the ladybug, add another layer mask. Grab a soft tip black brush and paint the door and fenders to hide the hard edges. Create a snapshot, Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+E and name it Snapshot. Go to File>Place 'Magnify.png', move it to the bottom-left corner and hit Return/Enter.



Create the lens

11 Grab the Magic Wand (W) and click inside the magnifying glass. Create a new layer underneath (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N), name it Lens. Fill with white. Set the Fill to 20%. Go to Layer>Layer Style. Check Bevel & Emboss set Size to 40px, check Inner Shadow set Opacity to 50%, Distance to 30px, Choke to 0% and Size to 250px, then click OK.



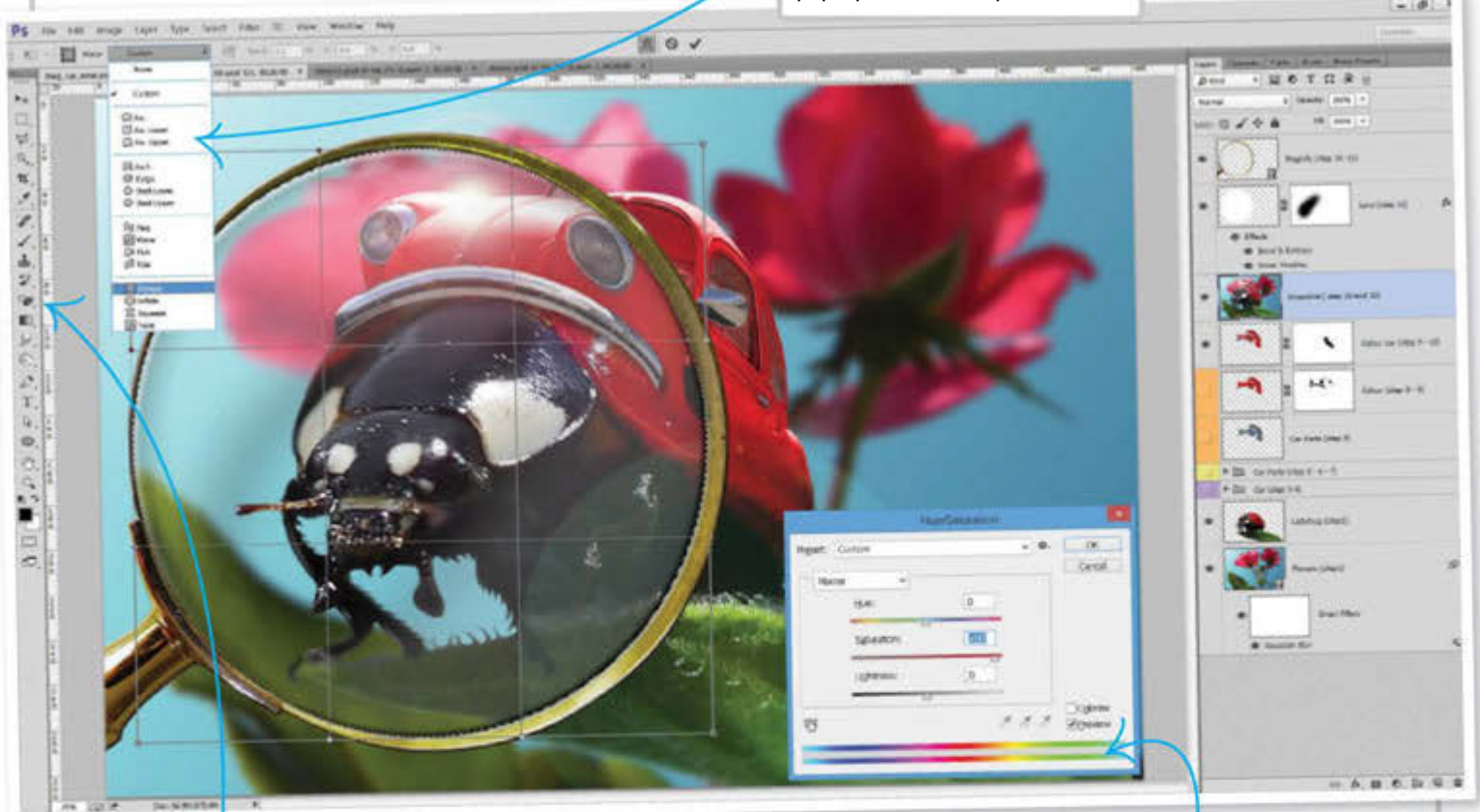
Add a fish-eye effect

12 Keep the Lens selection active and then click on the Snapshot layer. Go to Select>Modify>Contract by 100px and click OK. Now go to Edit>Transform>Warp. In the tool option bar click Custom, choose Fisheye and hit Return/Enter. As a final touch add a lens flare over the hood (Filter>Render>Lens Flare).

Closer look Key tools and techniques

WARP PRESETS

Apply a variety of predefined shapes to your images by choosing the warp styles from the Custom pop-up menu in the options bar.



ERASER TOOLS

Use the Magic Eraser tool to erase pixels around a hard-edged object. Increase or decrease the Tolerance value to help erase a wider or narrower range of pixels.

ADJUSTMENTS

Apply the Hue/Saturation adjustment to change the colour or lightness intensity, or make tonal corrections to change the appearance of your image.

Discover the Crop tool

Discover a world of possibility within the most basic of tools in Photoshop

For most Photoshop users, the Crop tool is possibly the simplest tool of all, used only at the end of an edit to tidy everything up.

But as is the case with so many of Photoshop's most fundamental features, there's a good amount of artistic flair that can be unlocked with simple picture shaping.

Cropping doesn't just get rid of excess space from your image; it helps create a focal point, it can change perspective in a piece, and it can subliminally shift a viewer's eyes to what's important. It really is a subtle yet powerful way to improve a picture – it only takes a couple of clicks – and it's one of the easiest things to do with Photoshop, thanks to the helpful grids, overlays and exact ratios.

So while it's the case that most beginners will only crop their photos by eye, there are more accurate ways to make sure your picture is geometrically perfect, with features you might not even know existed. Here are some tips and tricks that will change the way you think about cropping, to help you frame your work just as a photographer would. After all, the better your crop, the more focused your image!



Source files available

ALTER PERSPECTIVE

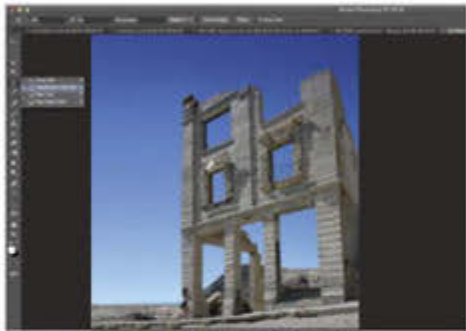
Use the Crop tool to quickly alter the perspective of an image.

Start image



The Perspective Crop

Warp the angle of a photo to give it a new spin



Select options

01 Firstly, select the Perspective Crop tool from the same place as the normal Crop and identify which perspective you actually want to change: it can't be too steep an angle to edit, otherwise the picture will just be stretched.

Set the markers

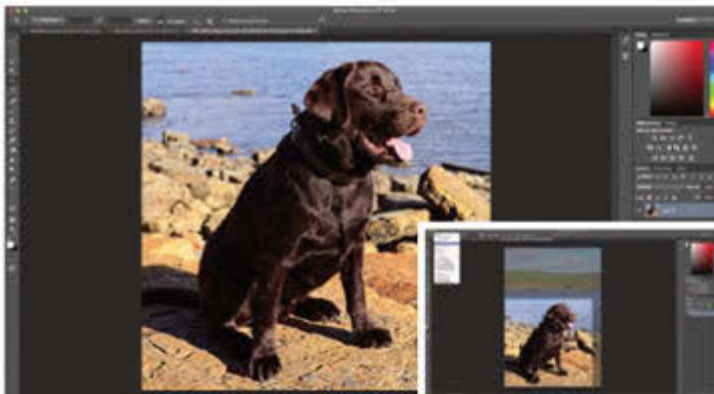
02 Choose what you'd like to give perspective to by drawing around it with the four markers. Remember that the edges of your crop selection will form the edges of your picture, so line up exactly what you want to be left with: the overlay grid can also help with this!

And now crop

03 Simply double-click to crop, just as you would normally. If you wish to resize the image, use the resize buttons across the lengths of the crop selection and not the corners, as this will keep the aspect ratio of the shape.

Other crop options

More features and shortcuts to make cropping even easier



Ratio

It can be a nightmare measuring the exact size you want a photo to be, but thankfully there's a ratio selection across the top bar with common proportions to pick from.



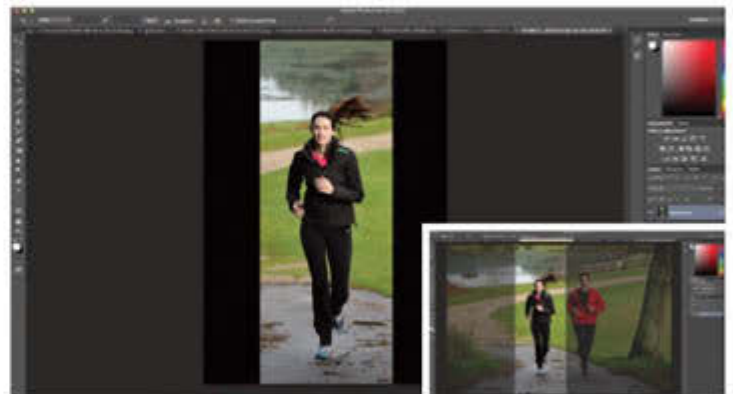
Straighten

Rotating the crop selection can help level out a photo, but you can get a precise measurement of how many degrees you are out, by using the Straighten tool. It lines up your horizon so that it's parallel.



Grids

You can change the crop grid, whether you're looking for a golden ratio or you just prefer to focus with diagonal lines. These grids can make it easier to focus on a single subject in the centre of a piece.



Delete cropped pixels

If you want to permanently remove the section of your photo that hasn't been cropped, you can. This enables you to tick the box to delete the surrounding image for good or not.



Get imaginative with clipping masks

Go beyond basic clipping masks to create a unique centrepiece for an eye-catching portrait

A clipping mask is a layer that uses its contents to dictate the visibility of one or more layers above it. They allow for precise framing and placement, and can be the gateway to imaginative visual concepts. At least two layers are required to form a clipping mask. To create one, just hold Opt/Alt key and click between the two layers. You can still edit each layer independently. To add more layers to the clipping mask, just place a layer above the last clipped layer, then repeat the shortcut command to clip those layers together.

In this tutorial, we'll go beyond using basic shapes. We'll start with a flower, then duplicate, position, and merge to create a complex organic structure. We'll then place the model above and create the clipping mask. Shapes, adjustment layers and typographic flourishes will be added to complete the composition.

Use what you learn to create your own unique clipping masks. Combine different shapes, utilise semi-transparency in areas, add layer styles... tap into your imagination and go mask wild!

Start
images



Duplicate flower

01 Open 'Start.psd' from the resources. Duplicate the flower several times (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and use Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to scale and position. Set the duplicates to Multiply so they blend together.



Merge and duplicate

02 In the Layers palette, select the bottom flower layer then Shift-click the top one to select all. Press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. (Photoshop, right-click, choose Convert to Smart Object). Duplicate (Cmd/Ctrl+J) several times. Go to Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to position, scale and rotate.

Designate clipping mask

03 Designate the top layer as the mask and situate centrally. Lower the Opacity of the other instances to 45-60%, and apply layer masks with the icon in the Layers palette. Use a soft, round brush at 60-80% Opacity to reduce.



"Clipping masks allow for precise framing and placement, and can be the gateway to imaginative visual concepts"



Create clipping mask

04 Select the top layer. Go to File>Place, add 'Model.jpg'. Opt/Alt-click between the top two layers. After you have created the mask, you can Free Transform the flower mask and the model independently to enjoy the optimal sizing and placement.



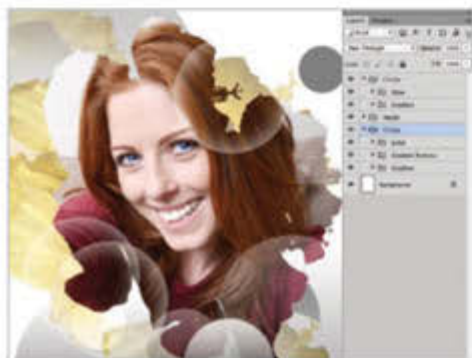
Gradient circles

05 Place 'CircleGradient.png' and 'CircleGradientReverse.png'. Duplicate each several times and position above and below the model. Use Free Transform to vary the scale, and change the Opacity from 25% to 80% so they overlap.



Make them glow

06 Place 'CircleGlow.png' above the model. Drop the Opacity to 50%. Select the Move tool. Opt/Alt+click and drag to simultaneously duplicate and position. Repeat this a few times.



Seeing double

07 Set the Foreground colour to white. Now use the Ellipse tool (set to Shape in Photoshop) to create circles below the model. Vary the Opacity from 50% to 100%. Set Foreground colour to black and create one circle, top-right, at 50% Opacity.



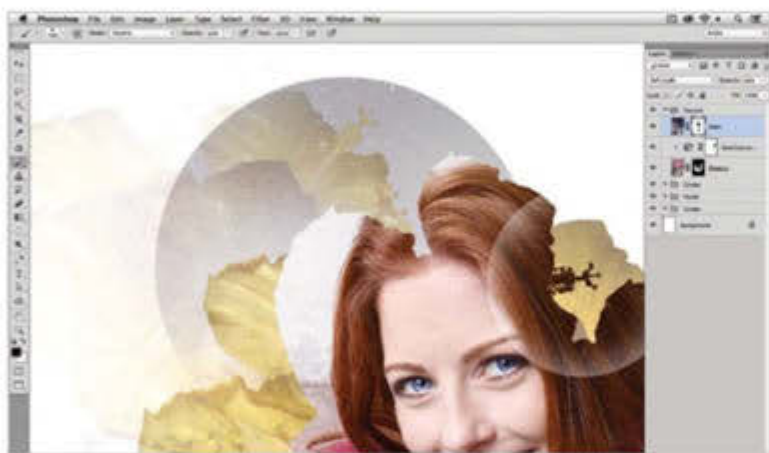
Add flower texture

08 Select the top layer. Place 'Flowers.jpg'. Set the blend mode to Pin Light and Opacity to 60%. Option/Alt+click the Add Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette. Now paint back with white and a soft, round brush at 60% Opacity to paint some of the texture back in.



Desaturate texture

09 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Hue/Saturation. Slide Saturation to -100. Create a clipping mask (Opt/Alt+Click between the layers). Paint black in the adjustment mask at 20% Opacity to restore some colour.



A starry texture

10 Place the 'Stars.jpg' image. Set the blend mode to Soft Light and drop the Opacity to 60%. Apply a layer mask with the icon in the Layers palette. Paint black at 60% Opacity in the mask to reduce in areas like the face.



Boost up contrast

11 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Hue/Saturation. Slide Saturation to -100. Set the blend mode to Soft Light to restore the colour and provide contrast.



New Gradient Fill

12 From the same menu, choose Gradient Fill. Pick the Yellow, Violet, Orange, Blue preset at 45 degrees. Tick Reverse. Set the blend mode to Color Dodge and Opacity to 80%. Paint black in the mask at 50% Opacity to reduce.



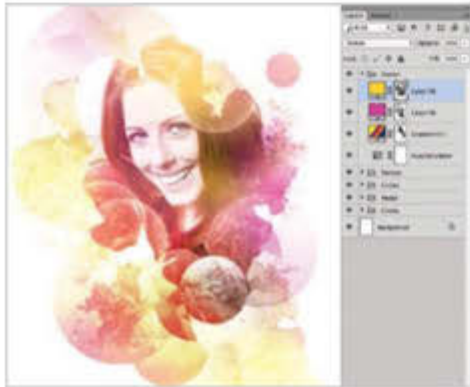
Apply Screen colouring

13 Go to Layer > New Fill Layer and choose Solid Color. Pick #e124ae for the colour code. Set blend mode to Screen and paint black into the mask at 50% Opacity to reduce in areas.

Expert tip

Adjustment layer masks

Using layer masks is integral to utilising the adjustment layers correctly in this image. Without them, most of the adjustments are too potent to apply canvas-wide. Layer masks enable us to pinpoint the colouring effects of Color Fill and Gradient Fill layers, and also to limit the application of balancing effects such as Levels and Vibrance. Be sure to use soft, round brushes for best results, and adjust brush opacity and size as needed.



Increase the colour

14 Apply another Solid Color fill layer but this time pick #ffd200 for the new colour. Set the blend mode to Screen again, and paint black in the mask to lessen the impact in certain areas.



Apply Vivid Light

15 Add the last Solid Color fill layer and pick #087bc0 for the colour. Set blend mode to Vivid Light. Click the mask and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Now paint back with white at 50% Opacity to apply on the right side.



Increase the saturation

16 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button, choose Vibrance (Elements, use Hue/Saturation). Slide both Vibrance (Photoshop only) and Saturation to +100. Invert the mask (Cmd/Ctrl+I), then paint back with white at 50% to apply.



Self-multiply

17 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button and choose Levels. Don't actually adjust anything in the Levels dialog, just set the blend mode to Multiply. Paint black in the mask's central area and edges at 80% Opacity to reduce.



Add typographic flourishes

18 Select the Type tool. Choose a script font like Bickham Script Pro, a large font size, and white font colour. Add an 'A' and position for best fit. Continue adding more letters using different sizes and colour.



Easily build a 3D scene

Learn how to model, texture, light and render a tabletop scene completely within Photoshop

For many Photoshop artists, the 3D toolset remains a bit of a mystery.

Photoshop doesn't claim to be a 3D modelling and animation package at the same level of Maya or 3ds Max, but the basic 3D features it does contain can produce some stunning results.

The modelling features are probably the most mysterious. Artists tend to import

3D models from other software to work with. Photoshop's modelling capabilities are mostly limited to extrudes and revolves, but even that is surprisingly sufficient for many projects.

In this tutorial we will explore how to model an entire tabletop scene completely within Photoshop. Then we will dig into building up the materials library to include complex

surface materials like glass and metal. We will even work with some Image Based Lighting to get outstanding rendered reflections, refractions and shadows.

If you've ever wanted to learn what all the fuss over the 3D tools was about, this is the project to get you started. We think once you get a taste of what is possible, you will be hungry for more!



Sketch the wine glass

01 Create a new file at 240mm x 210mm and use the Pen tool to sketch out a half profile of a wine glass. The shape needs to be closed, so continue the path into the 'cup' portion of the glass and connect the path down the stem.



Revolve a glass

02 Go to 3D > New 3D Extrusion from Selected Path. Photoshop switches to the 3D workspace. Set the Shape Preset to Bend X 360 Right and set the Extrusion Depth to 0 px. The result should look like a 3D wine glass.



Add the wine

03 The wine inside the glass needs to be its own element. Use the glass path as a guide and create a closed, half profile shape of the wine. Extrude that path using the same method as the glass.



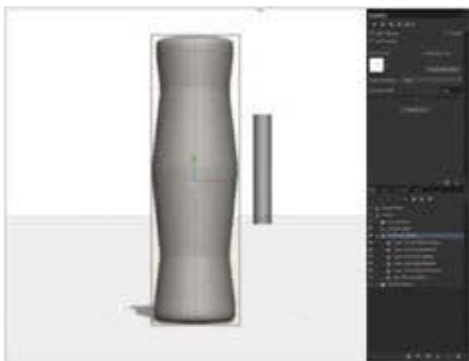
Create a wine bottle

04 Draw out the profile path for the wine bottle. Remember to make it a closed shape before extruding it, and be sure to leave an opening at the mouth of the bottle. If you draw the right side, then change the Deformation Axis on the extrusion to be on the left.



Create the cork

05 To create the cork, use a circle shape and a regular extrusion, not the rotation. In the Shape Preset settings, set the Taper to 95%. In the Cap settings, set the Sides to Front and Back, the Bevel Width to 45, Inflate Angle to 90, and Strength to 11%.



Make the handle

06 Create another half profile for the corkscrew handle. Be sure the edge for the rotation is straight and use the rotation extrusion again to complete the handle. Extrude a circle again to create a cylinder for the upper part of the corkscrew.



Add the twist

07 Use a similar sized circle for the corkscrew extrusion, but start with the Twist 540 Right preset to create the basis for the corkscrew. In the Deform settings, set the Extrusion Depth to 113, Twist to 2400 and Taper to 12%.



Make the cheese wheel

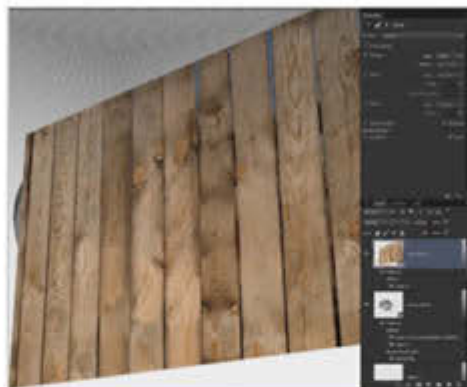
08 Revolve yet another profile curve for the cheese wheel. To create the triangular cutout area, go to the Deform settings and set the Horizontal Angle to 305. This controls how far the curve is rotated to create the solid shape.

Expert tip



Retouch renders

Just because the primary portion of the project is done as a 3D render, don't forget you are using the most powerful image-retouching software around. It's much easier and faster to make minor retouching edits after the render, than it is to change a property and re-render the whole scene. In our final project here, we added some additional lighting, colourisation, dodge and burn, and even a subtle lens effect after the render was completed.



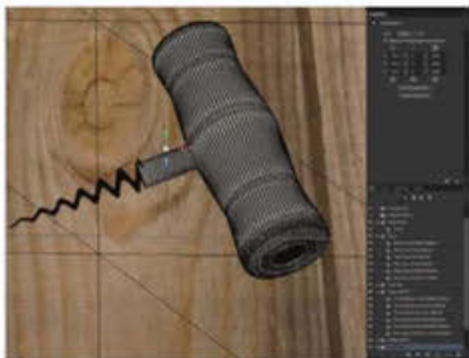
Add wooden planks

09 Open the 'fence-19544.jpg' image and drag it into the scene. Go to 3D>New Mesh from Layer>Postcard to transform the photo into a flat 3D plane that can be rotated around and positioned within the scene.



Set the scene

10 Select all the 3D layers and go to 3D>Merge 3D Layers to create a single 3D scene. Rotate the wood plane to be horizontal and use the Move to Ground button in the coordinates panel. Then position all the other objects and the camera to create an interesting composition.



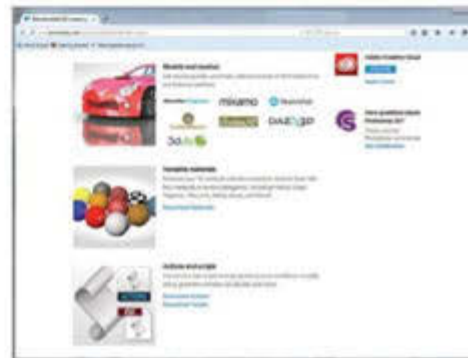
Group objects

11 Some elements are comprised of multiple pieces, like the corkscrew and the wine bottle with its cork. To position these, group the individual meshes together with 3D>Group objects. The 3D panel will show these assembled in a group folder.



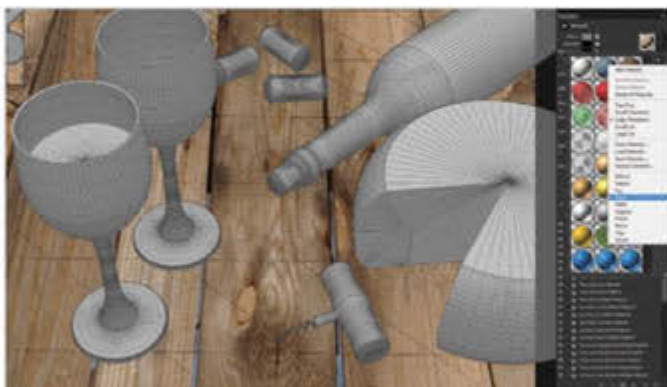
Select Instance Objects

12 Instances are duplicates of an object that are quicker to render and still connected to the original object properties. Right-click on the wine glass layer and select Instance Object. Then reposition the new glass. Create multiple corks in the same way.



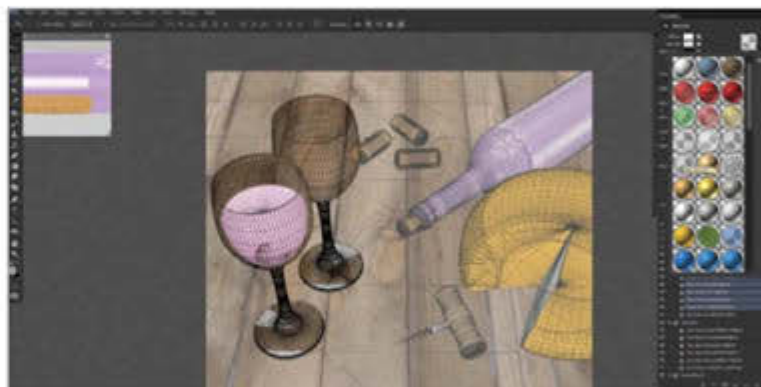
Download extra materials

13 Go to 3D>Get More Content to launch a web browser directly to Adobe's 3D content page. Find the section for Versatile Materials and hit the Download Materials link. Then open and install the materials file.



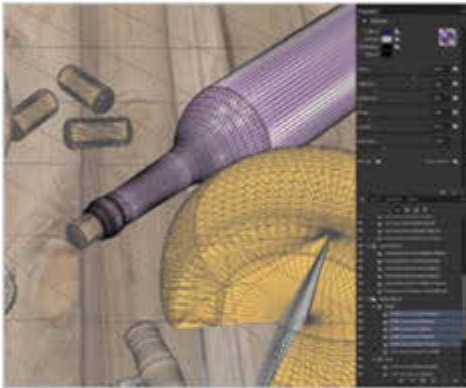
Add materials

14 Now switch to the Materials focus of the 3D panel. In the Properties panel there is a thumbnail for the selected material. Just open that up and then click on the gear icon in order to get the context menu. Load the Glass, Metal and Wood material libraries.



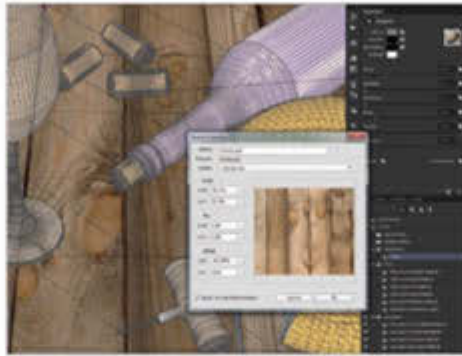
Assign materials

15 Several of the objects can be assigned materials directly from the library. Select all the glass material layers from the wine glass and assign the Glass Smooth material from the library. There are also cork, wood and steel materials for the objects that require those. The Orange Peel material works well for the cheese block.



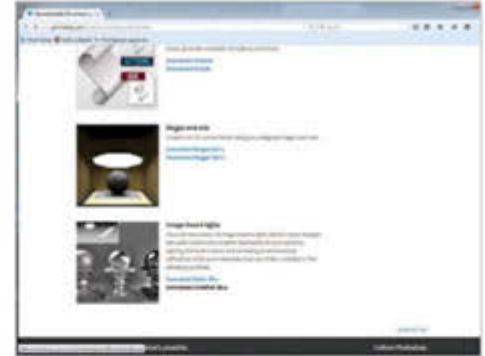
Customise the materials

16 Some of the objects will require adjustments to the materials. For the wine bottle, start with the Plastic Acrylic Blue material. Change the colour to a deep purple, Shine to 55%, Reflection to 16%, Opacity to 82%, and Refraction to 1.49.



Align the texture

17 To better align the wooden tabletop texture, select the wood material and click on the document icon next to the Diffuse colour chip. Select Edit UV Properties to get the Texture Properties window. Here you can adjust the scale and offset of the texture.



Download light images

18 Go back to Adobe's 3D Content page and scroll down to the image-based lights section. Download the Creative IBLs and unzip the content. This contains three folders of creative high-dynamic-range environment images that can be used to light your 3D scene in a realistic way.



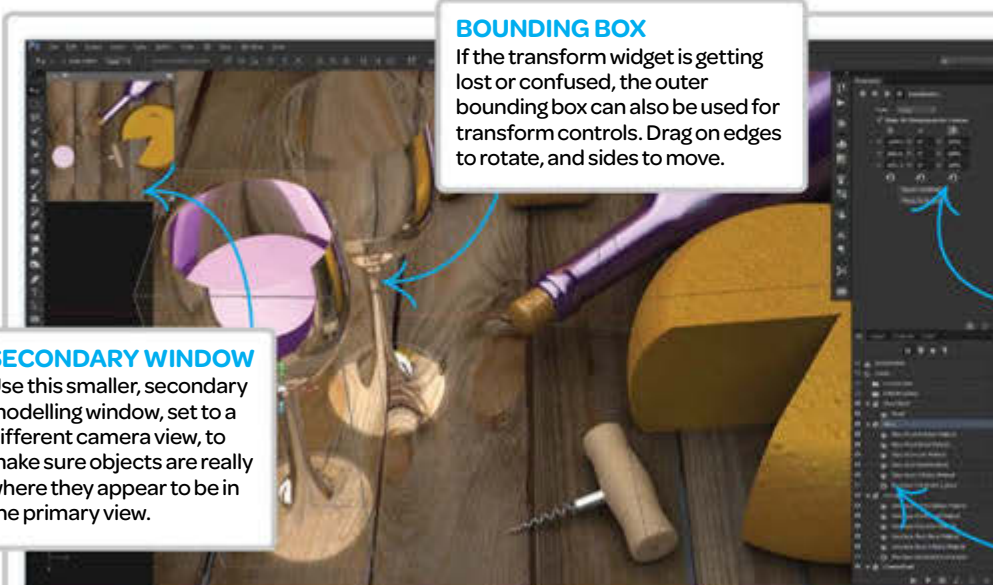
Light the scene

19 Go to the Environment layer and in the Properties panel, load a new file for the IBL (Image Based Light). In our scene we selected the 'CreativeIBL-07-LightRigB.hdr' file from the Creative set downloaded in the previous step.



Render away!

20 It's time to put all the pieces together into a single rendered image. At the bottom of the Properties panel is the Render button. Or you can find it in the main 3D menu. Be prepared, scenes like this with reflections and refractions can take a long time to render.



SECONDARY WINDOW

Use this smaller, secondary modelling window, set to a different camera view, to make sure objects are really where they appear to be in the primary view.

BOUNDING BOX

If the transform widget is getting lost or confused, the outer bounding box can also be used for transform controls. Drag on edges to rotate, and sides to move.

Closer look Working with 3D objects

How to navigate a digital 3D realm

COORDINATES PANEL

Use this handy panel to dial in object position, rotation, and scale with precision that is difficult to obtain with the on-screen transform widgets.

3D PANEL

This is the central control centre for working in 3D in Photoshop. Familiarise yourself with each of the different types of layers, environment, view, meshes, materials and lights.

DODGE

Dodge slightly over the eyes, just to bring out the rest of the darkened effect.



Master the Burn Tool

Add darkness and saturation in controlled measures, just by using a simple, brush-like tool

The Burn tool is one of a pair. With dodging and burning, you can add perfect contrast to any photo, even digital paintings, by brushing over the areas you want to improve. You've probably used them one after the next; the Dodge tool to lighten and the Burn tool to darken, but can they be used apart?

The Dodge tool is a must-use in many photo fixes; it can correct the whites of eyes, yellowy teeth, and even just give a shine to an object. The Burn tool, however, is perhaps less used. It darkens pictures, applies a bit of colour to a dark area, and can be used to create HDR-style finishes, make subjects

stand out from their backgrounds, and even give a vignette to a picture. It's just as versatile as the Dodge tool, and it's a simple feature that can be used in almost any kind of picture.

But how can you get the best out of this simple tool? Let's take a look at the basics of the Burn, and a few instances in which you can apply it.

"It applies a bit of colour to a dark area, and can be used to create HDR-style finishes, make subjects stand out from their backgrounds"



Apply the Burn tool Apply dark shades in controlled areas by brushing



Create a grey layer

01 Create a new layer to burn on, rather than burning the actual photo itself. Fill your new layer in with a neutral grey colour and set this layer to Overlay. Any burning will show up, but won't edit it.



Adjust settings

02 Experimenting with the brushes and the hardness settings, as well as the Range and Exposure of the tool. Pick between 10-20%, and set the Range to Midtones.



Think about your strokes

03 When using a large brush, it's okay to raise the Exposure, but be careful not to make multiple strokes, one over the next. This will mean that you'll have patches of differing darkness that will stick out in the final piece.



Add finer details

04 Use a smaller brush and a low Exposure for the fine details. Be sure to burn over the eyebrows, the space between the eyebrows and the eyelids, and parts of the hair. Don't burn on the face, as this can make a subject look aged and wrinkled.

Additional uses When else does the Burn tool come in handy?



Bring out colour

The Burn tool is great for darkening, but it also saturates a picture. By using the same neutral grey layer technique, try burning over bright skies in your picture to reveal more colour and give them a bit of vibrancy.



Make subjects pop

Darkening and shading is a standard technique used by artists for making other things stand out and for adding contrast. Apply a burn all over a picture, except for over a subject, to make people stand out from their backgrounds.



Add a vignette

Vignettes can give a classic effect and draw attention to the centre of your pictures, simply by adding darkness to the edges. Add your neutral grey layer and burn around the outside of your picture to create one in a hurry.

Tricks.

72 6 easy ways to paint

Learn different painting techniques

82 Master architectural visualisation

Craft your own building

86 Add a dispersion pixel effect

Use great effects on your portraits

90 Create a split tone effect

Make your monochrome portraits stand out

92 Pixel a portrait

Recreate portraits in pixel form

96 Build dynamic composites

Change the background on landscape shots

100 Forge a custom lens-flare effect

Go JJ Abrams on your photographs

102 Make macro composites

Create images within images with ease

106 Apply the bleach bypass effect

Use the effect on your photos

108 Transform a portrait with blend modes

Discover how blend modes change images

112 Generate a lomo effect

Recreate Instagram effects easily

114 Style text effects

Use photographs to build striking text

118 Apply mystical smoke effects

Create a genie-like portrait



86



82



72

Create digital painting from your photos



“It’s important to not limit your imagination and try to experiment with different ideas”





6 EASY WAYS TO PAINT

Discover your inner artist when you realise digital painting is actually easier than you first thought

Painting is one of the most magical things you can learn to do in Photoshop. A well-crafted digital painting really catches the eye like nothing else, and there are so many styles and techniques out there for you to learn and master!

But the truly great thing about Photoshop is that you don't have to be a seasoned pro to paint like one. Perhaps you struggled to put paintbrush to paper when studying art at school, and have not attempted it since, dismissing yourself as a painter and remaining in your comfort zone. Thanks to Photoshop, you can be the artist you always wanted to be.

The usual suspects play a huge role in creating a great digital painting, and they are all easy to use if you know how. Dry Media brushes can create fantastic

oil-painting effects; the Art History tool is extremely versatile; and the Mixer Brush is great for creating a stylish smudge effect. But actually, there's so much more to painting than just brushing.

It's simple to apply the many techniques you learned on photos and compositions to painting. Dodging and burning, for example, can bring a painting to life, and using blend modes can really highlight brush strokes, just as it can bring out the colours in a photograph. You can use blur filters, the Filter Gallery and even basic lighting techniques - and it's more straightforward than you might think.

If you love turning the ordinary into something incredible, and enjoy being creative, digital painting might just be for you after all!

PAINT FROM YOUR PHOTOS

Turn any photo into a convincing painting using some creative brush tools in Photoshop

Photoshop isn't normally thought of as a painting program. In fact, it is usually considered to be a photo editor. Most users are aware that there is a Brush tool and sometimes they use it to touch up a mask, but rarely is it used for much more than that. It may surprise you to learn that Photoshop actually has a fairly robust brush engine that is quite capable of crafting beautiful digital paintings. Even more impressive is the capability to transform a photograph into a convincing painting, without relying on filters. Follow along as we show you a painless process to transform your photos into painted works of art.

TEXTURE THE BACKGROUND

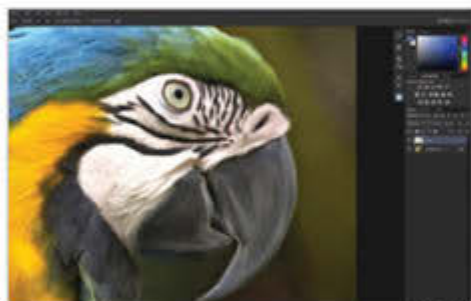
Adobe's new Paper Texture Pro extension is perfect for creating unique and artistic backgrounds to images.

Learn smudge painting



Set the Smart Blur

01 Before beginning with the Smudge tool, the image needs to have some of the finer details removed. Use the Smart Blur filter for this. These settings will depend on the image, but we used a Radius of 3 and Threshold of 25.



Smooth smudging

02 Create a new layer and go to the Smudge tool. Use a hard edged, round brush, set the Strength to 80% and be sure to check the 'Sample All Layers' option. Then begin tracing along the contours and feature lines of the parrot's head and beak.



Fine feathers

03 Create a new layer for the feathers and switch to a spatter brush tip to better capture the texture of the feathers. The trick to getting the feathers to layer correctly is to start with the bottom feathers and work your way up towards the head.



Bold background

04 Group all the photo and painted layers together. Then use a layer mask on the group to isolate the painting from the photo's background. Now you can add a textured, more painted-style type of background surface to complete the effect.



EXPERT TIP

Treat the edges

Masking out the primary subject can lead to some strange edge areas that don't fit with the visual effect of the piece. Make sure to select the Smudge tool's option for Sample All Layers and it will generate a nice blend between the painted elements and the background.

Discover the Mixer Brush tool



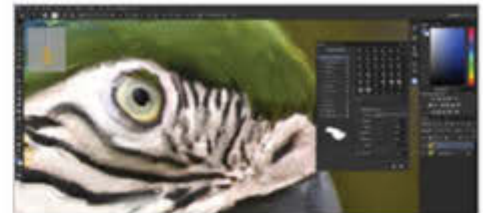
Find the tool

01 Buried under the brush menu is the Mixer Brush tool. This tool is like a sophisticated version of the Smudge brush. Start with the Moist preset and engage the 'Clean brush after each stroke' option.



Natural Media Bristle brushes

02 In the Brush preset panel look for the brushes with an icon that looks like a brush profile, not a stamp of the tip. These are the Bristle brushes – they simulate real-media brushes, rather than being computerised.



Mix and paint

03 The Mixer Brush tool will act similarly to the Smudge tool, but it is able to create a larger application of the painted effect much faster. Experiment with the tool presets and the Bristle brush settings.



Brush over the background

04 Use a larger Bristle brush to quickly paint the background. Increase the Bristle length and decrease the Stiffness to get a soft brush effect. The higher the Wet and Mix settings are, the more the colours will mix together.



ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Just because it's a painting project, it doesn't mean you can leave out the rest of Photoshop's image-editing features. If the piece is looking dull, add a Vibrance adjustment layer. If the Contrast is lacking, throw in a Curves adjustment layer. Use the best tools at your disposal, don't limit yourself to any particular set of features, find what works and go with it!



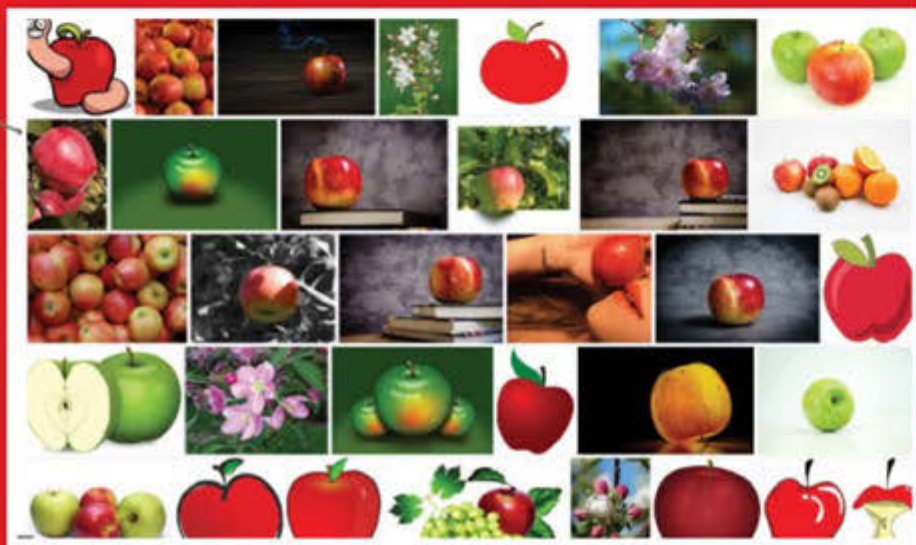
PAINTED MASKS

Most Photoshop users often use brushes to apply a Fade setting on an adjustment layer. However, the more sophisticated brush tools work on a mask too. In fact, they're a great way to create a convincing painted edge to a layer. Opt/Alt+clicking on the mask thumbnail will reveal the full mask and make it easier to paint on.

PAINT FROM SCRATCH

Don't be intimidated – digital painting can be a lot easier than actual painting

Real-media painting is a challenge that takes hours of study and experience to truly master. Working with actual paint can either be hugely rewarding or greatly disappointing – it is not easy! However, cross the digital divide and things get much simpler. Here we have the benefit of layers, perfectly clean brushes, erasers and the glorious Undo button. If you've never tried your hand at digital painting, Photoshop is a great place to start. Our best advice is to start with something simple, like a humble piece of fruit. Learn how to capture form, light, colour, shadow and texture. So follow along as we guide you through how to paint an apple.



REFERENCE PHOTOS

Unless you've painted a thousand apples before, don't rely entirely on your memory to know the intricate characteristics of the fruit. Closely study a live apple or reference photos. Pay careful attention to how the colours change, how the light reflects and what the texture of the skin looks like. Good painting always starts with great observation.

EXPERT TIP

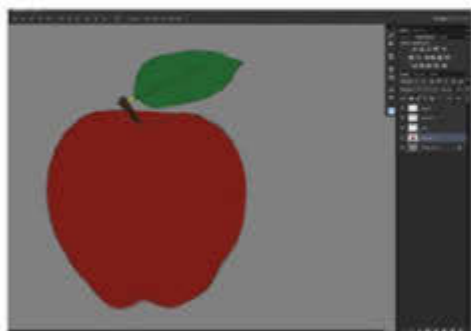
Clone Source panel

When attempting to align a sample point for the Clone Stamp tool, you might be reluctant to change the sample point and lose the alignment. To solve this, go to Window>Clone Source. The icons along the top of the panel allow you to save up to five sample settings.

TEXTURED BACKGROUND

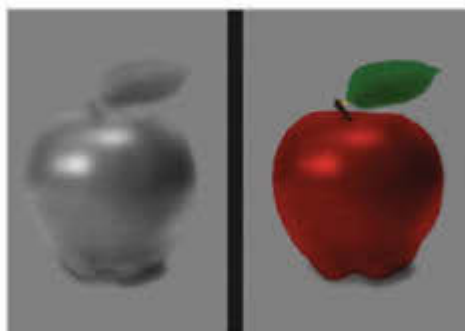
An interesting textured backdrop can be used to accent a painting. However, be careful not to use one that is too bold or distracting.

Paint an apple



01 Draw a simple sketch

Begin with a very simple sketch, then use a basic, hard-edged brush to fill in the primary colours for the different areas. Painting each colour on a new layer makes things much easier if you want to edit that colour later on.



02 Add some shading

Add a new top layer for the basic shading of the fruit. Set the Blending mode to Overlay and then use only shades of grey to begin generating the shadow and highlighting areas of the scene.



03 Work with colour tones

Add a new layer under the Shading layer and paint in the different colour tones. Add texture to the fruit with the direction of brush strokes. Use a top layer set to Overlay and large, soft brush strokes for subtle colour shifts.



CAPTURE TEXTURE

By creating brush strokes that go in the same direction as the natural grain of the apple, the texture becomes more believable.



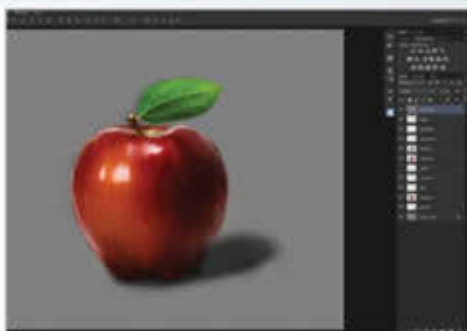
ATTENTION TO COLOUR

Pay attention to the use of warm and cool colour palettes to create a balanced composition. Here the warmth of the red is accentuated by the cool blue colour behind it.



Add highlights and shadows

04 Add a Highlights layer set to Screen and use white paint to add specular lighting. Add a shadow layer set to Multiply and use a soft, dark brush to create a shadow. Now add a details layer and use a smaller brush for the flecks.



Dodge and Burn

05 Add another layer on top and fill it with 50% grey through the Edit>Fill menu. Set the Blending mode to Overlay and use the Dodge and Burn tools to increase the Highlights and Shadows of the painting.



TAKE A SNAPSHOT

By default, Photoshop has 20 states of History, or 'Undos' that it holds in memory. Digital painting tends to go through this quickly, as every brush stroke counts as something that can be undone. If you find yourself relying on the History List, learn to make Snapshots as you paint so it's easy to dial back the painting to that point if you need to.

GAUSSIAN BLUR

Duplicate the merged layer then go to Gaussian Blur. Change the layer to Lighter Color and add a mask to erase the effects on her eyes.

SHARPEN

Merge all layers together then use the Smart Sharpen to create more details on the portrait.

BAS RELIEF

Go To Filter Gallery>Sketch>Bas Relief, Detail: 14, Smoothness: 3, Light: Left then click OK. Then convert the colour to B&W and change the layer to Divide.

CREATE A CLASSIC-ART MASTERPIECE

Use the Round Blunt Medium Stiff brush to achieve your desired brush stroke

Austrian artist Leopold Schmutzler used colour and brush strokes in a rather interesting way. Here you will learn how to use two brushes with a few layers to achieve his classic style of art. The primary brush for this task is Round Blunt Medium Stiff, as this achieves the brush stroke we're aiming for. The second brush will create the background and is really worth exploring. Add texture to your brush with #10 Extra Heavy from Brush Presets.

Add textures with brushes



Use the background brush

01 Create a new layer and then load the Background brush. Set the Opacity to 49% and activate the 'Always Use Pressure for Opacity' option. Set the Flow to 10% and this time, activate the Always Use Pressure for Size option.



Add a new layer

02 Add a new layer. Use the Round Blunt Medium Stiff Mixer brush. In Brush Presets, choose Texture and #10 Extra Heavy Texture. Set Wet to 36%, Load to 2%, Mix to 40%, Flow to 39% and 'Sample All Layers' to Off.



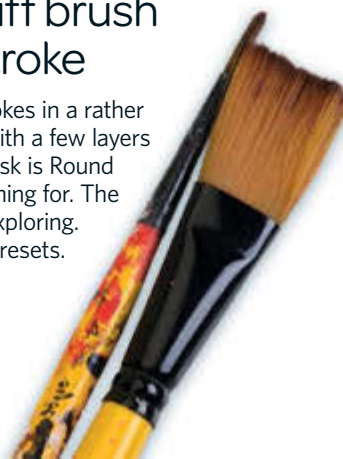
More Details and Highlights

03 For the clothes and highlights, use the same options. Add new layers for the Highlights, change them to Linear Dodge, Vivid Light, Color Dodge and Screen with low Opacity. Use a mask to erase unnecessary effects.



Smart Sharpen adjustments

04 Merge all of the layers then duplicate them. Go to Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen; set the Amount to 114 and the Radius to 0.8. Next enhance the colours by going to Adjustments and selecting Selective Color.





THE SOFT PAINTING STYLE

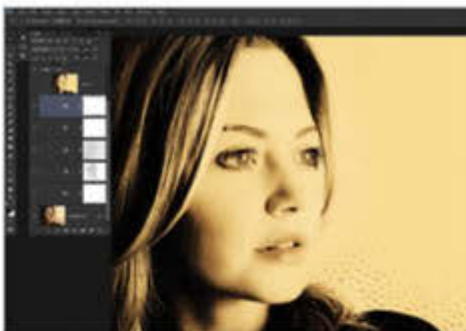
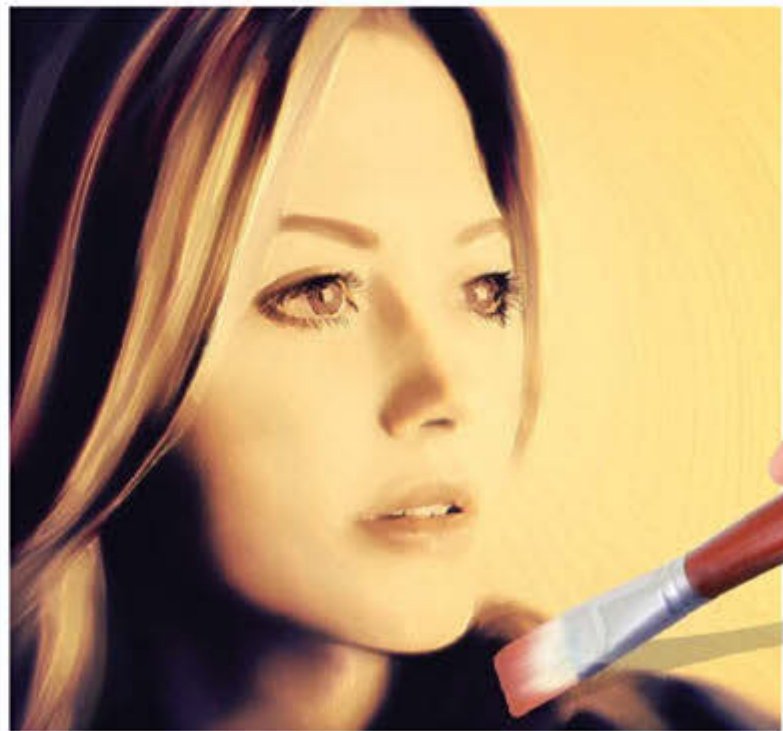
Reveal your softer side

The soft-art effect can produce wonderfully mystical pieces of artwork. Whether it's a faraway landscape or a dreamy portrait, learn the techniques and start experimenting.



Go black and white

01 To achieve a more prominent contrast of colour, heighten the black-and-white tones. To do this, go to Adjustments and select the Black & White option. Next, change the Presets to Infrared. Then change the Layer to Screen so that you can achieve the white skin.



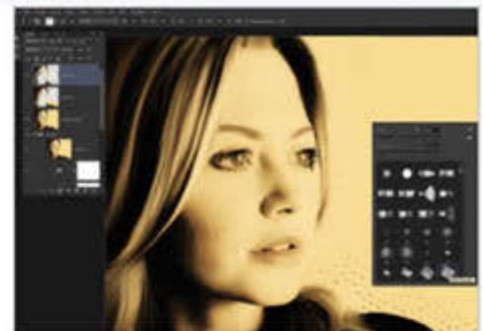
Hue/Saturation

02 Go to Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Increase the Hue to +40, the Saturation to -50, and the Darkness to +5. Load a Brown Gradient into your Gradient Editor and then use Selective Color to enhance the colours. Merge all layers using Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E.



Smart Blur

03 The trick here is to use the Smart Blur filter to create some of the fine lines on her eyes and hair. Then change the Radius to 28.6, the Threshold to 47.4. Go on to change the Quality to High then click OK and merge all the layers together again.



Chalk Brush

04 Once you have merged all the layers, add a new layer at the top, then click on the Mixer Brush. Select Chalk 60 px, activate the 'Clean Brush After Each Stroke' option and set Wet to 20%, Load to 50%, Mix to 22%, Flow to 37% and activate Sample All Layers.

ROUND ANGLE LOW STIFFNESS BRUSH

Use the round angle low stiffness brush for the hair and background. Add an empty layer, then use the Mixer Brush and select round angle low stiffness, setting the size to somewhere between 30-47px. Note that 'Clean Brush After Each Stroke' option must be active. Set Wet to 20%, Load to 25%, Mix to 10%, Flow to 10% activate Sample All Layers.



THE FILTER GALLERY

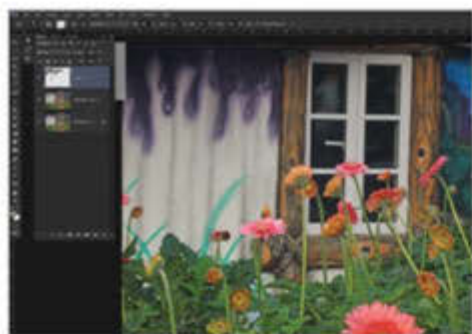
Photoshop has filters to assist you when painting. Go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Brush Strokes>Angled Stroke. Change the Direction Balance to 43, the Stroke Length to 31 and the Sharpness to 1. This filter will help add effect to the hair. Merge every layer and duplicate. Use the Bas Relief>Detail and convert it to black and white. Then change the layer properties to Divide.

DIGITAL OIL PAINTINGS

Use Dry Media brushes to achieve the look of a realistic oil painting

In this simple tutorial you will discover the best tools to achieve an oil-painting effect and watercolour texture. First of all, you must create a focal point to engage the viewer. The main tools are mixer, brush, filters and adjustments. You will learn more about how to get the correct setting for brushes and adding texture. Then you will understand more about how to use the Filter Gallery in the final few steps.

Using the round fan brush



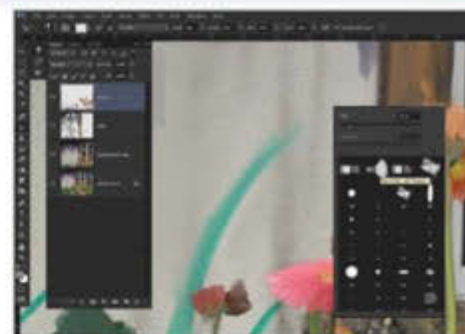
Dry Media Brushes

01 Open your chosen image, go to brushes and select Dry Media brushes. Use flat blunt with Texture. Add a new layer and activate 'Clean Brush After Each Stroke'. Set the Wet to 8%, Load to 8%, Mix to 8%, Flow to 20% and make 'Sample All Layers' active.



Brush Presets

02 Add a new layer using the same brush. Go to Brush Presets>Texture>Extra Heavy Canvas and use these settings for the Mixer Brush. Once again, set the Wet to 8%, Load to 8%, Mix to 8%, Flow to 20% and select 'Sample All Layers'.

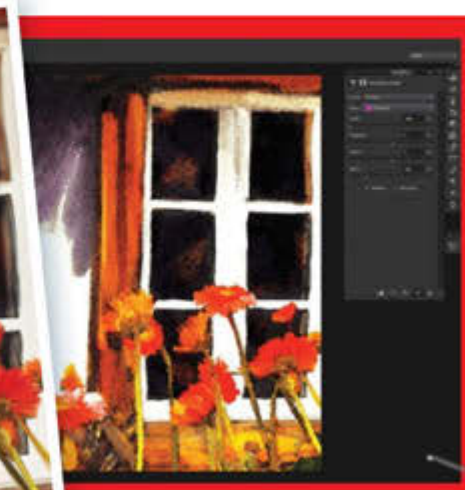


Round Fan with Texture

03 The best brush for foliage is the round fan brush with Texture. Add a new layer then select the brush from Mixer Brush. 'Clean Brush After Each Stroke' must be active. Set the Wet to 8%, Load to 8%, Mix to 8% and Flow to 40%. 'Sample All Layers' must be active.

WATERCOLOUR EFFECTS

Once all of the steps have been completed, merge all of the layers by pressing Shift+Opt/Alt+Cmd/Ctrl+E. The trick is how to transfer your oil painting to a watercolour drawing in one step, so it really resembles traditional art. Duplicate the layer then go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Artistic>Watercolor. Set the Brush Detail to 1, Shadow Intensity to 0 and the Texture to 1, then click OK. The final step is to make your coloured paint effect look like an original painting. The step is very simple and only uses selective colour twice. Use Selective Color and activate Absolute, focusing on Red, Yellow and White. Do the same for the second layer, add Selective Color and select Relative, using the same colours: Red, Yellow and White. Next, merge all of the layers.



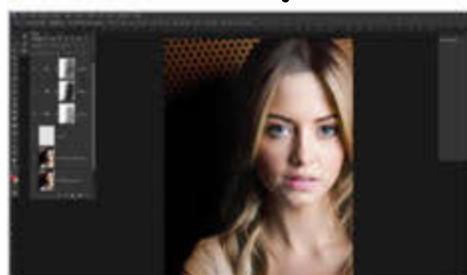


ART HISTORY TOOL

Learn how to use the Art History tool to create amazing paint effects

Many don't know the purpose of the Art History tool. It is similar to the Brush tool and Mixer Brush. It can create different painting effects depending on the time and effort you are prepared to put in. The best setting for the Art History tool is to set the Mode to Normal & Darken, make the Opacity between 40-63%, add Style, set the Area to 20-40 and the Tolerance must be set to 0%. You will learn how to use Smart Blur to give a different painting style.

Art History



Adjustments Tools

01 Go to Adjustments. Select Levels, Gradient, Opacity: 100%. Add Color Balance and manipulate with colours. Change the layer of Color Balance to Linear Burn, Opacity 100%.



Smart Blur

02 On a new layer use the color # b9a795, change the layer to Color Burn, Opacity: 60%. Merge layers (Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E). Duplicate the layer then go to Filter>Blur>Smart Blur. Radius: 57.9, Threshold: 81.9, Quality: High, Mode: Normal.



Start image

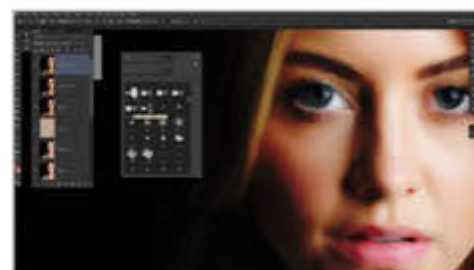
EXPERT TIP

Paint Daubs Filter

For the final step, go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Artistic>Paint Daubs. Make the Brush Size 16, set the Sharpness to 16 and Brush Type to Wide Blurry, then click OK. Add Texturizer from the Filter Gallery, then Selective Color to enhance the colours.

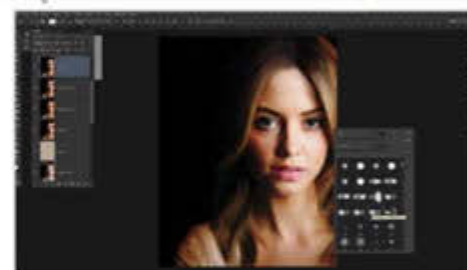
SETTINGS

Use the recommended settings on the Art History tool for best results, but experiment to discover your own unique style!



Art History Tool

03 Duplicate, go to the History Tool, click Set the source for the History Brush. Go to Layer, use Art History Brush with Flat Angle Low Bristle Count Brush, set size to 8-11px, Mode to Darken, Opacity to 56%, Style to Tight Medium, Area to 36px and Tolerance and 0%.



Mixer Brush

04 Now merge all of your layers (Shift+Alt+Ctrl+E), then use the Flat Angle Low Bristle Count from the Mixer Brush with the Size set to 50-60px. Active Clean Brush after each stroke, set Wet to 25, Load to 33%, Mix to 38%, and Flow to 11%.





Master architectural visualisation

Create an eye-catching image using striking mood, colour combination and well-defined detail

At FlyingArchitecture, our job is to create images of different projects, while trying to recognise our client's ideas and give our expert guidance and knowledge to achieve the best result possible. For this project we worked with Xuberance (www.xuberance.org), the design team that were behind the eVolo skyscraper competition.

We usually start with a general vision of what the image should represent. It's important to not limit your imagination and try to experiment with different ideas. More options gives you more flexibility. You can find inspiration everywhere (books, paintings,

photographs or music for example), and don't forget, that it's a creative process initially.

After some research and discussion, we can start working on the image. To do this, you'll need to master basic rules for composition, colours and how to add more depth and detail using 2D assets. Creating complex images like this is always a bit challenging. Try to break it up into smaller parts like background, foreground, foliage and people. This way you have better control over every part of the image. Be careful though, as it's important to preserve the connection between all of the aspects, so that it works as one coherent piece. Prepare all your reference

pictures and assets so that you are ready. Don't try to adjust them when they're not fitting properly – save your energy. Photoshop is a powerful tool, but spend 15 more minutes finding better photos with the proper lighting and angles, and you will achieve better results. Let's get started!

"It's important to not limit your imagination and try to experiment with different ideas. More options give you more flexibility"

From 3D to Photoshop Prepare your PSD file before post production

Render the output format

01 We start by importing our V-Ray render channels into Photoshop. Always remember to save up the highest possible quality of render channels. These are not JPGs or PNGs. We are talking about their bit depth: 32-bit HDR floating format. To import these files into Photoshop, go to File>Scripts>Load files into stack. Then click Browse, locate all the render channels you saved and click Open. Back in the small pop-up window, click OK. Their quality won't suffer from using multiple adjustment layers in Photoshop.



Organise your PSD file

02 You can't fully utilise the variety of adjustments in 32-bit mode. After importing all render channels, go to Image>Mode>16 Bits/Channel. Now you should organise your PSD layer structure. Sometimes, there are hundreds of layers and it can be uncomfortable to work on. We have to give credit to Adam Hotovy (CGI artist, Corona Renderer development team) who inspired us with this organised layer system a few years ago.



Render the Alpha mask

03 First of all, apply your Alpha mask to the render image. To do that, click on the Alpha channel, press Cmd/Ctrl+A and then Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy the layer to the buffer. Then, create a layer mask for the render layer. Holding the left Alt button, click inside the layer mask that you created in the previous step and press Cmd/Ctrl+V.



Adjust the exposure

04 To restore the contrast that you achieved in the original rendering, use the Exposure adjustment. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Exposure, and use 0.45-0.50 as a value for Gamma Correction to achieve the desired effect. This is the universal approach which should be done after each import of HDR files into Photoshop (but only if you use this linear workflow). Always use clipping masks so that you can work on separate elements. This way, an adjustment has an effect only on the render layer and nothing else. Ctrl/right-click on the adjustment layer and select Create Clipping Mask.



Add the sky

05 The sky is one of the most important aspects of the image because it defines the general mood. Always try to find the right balance between the complexity of the background/foreground and main subject. You don't want to overwhelm the viewer. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves and adjust the contrast of the sky. Do the same with Selective Color, Color Balance and Vibrance adjustments. Some areas of the sky need more attention to make them more appropriate (like the over-saturated lower part or darker top-right corner).



City in the background

06 Now you can start adding more depth and detail in the form of buildings in the background of the image. Always use layer masks (not the Eraser tool) to add or remove areas that you don't want to see (remember, white is visible and black is invisible). This way, you're not destroying the original image or adjustment layers. Now you can use the Brightness to make both buildings a bit lighter, Selective Color to add more yellow and black colour, and Vibrance to achieve more natural saturation.



Change the tones

07 The main building is a little bit flat. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness and make the left side of the building darker. Invert the Brightness layer mask using Cmd/Ctrl+I and paint darker areas inside it with the soft brush using white. The left side should be more bluish because of the shadow. Use Color Balance and Selective Color to achieve the best effect. The last step is to add a warm highlight on the top of the right building using the same method as you did before.



Make specific changes

08 Some areas around the main building need more editing. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness/Contrast to make the whole skyscraper brighter. Also, add more contrast with Curves to make it more defined. The colours on the right building are too warm, so use Selective Color and play with the neutrals to make it colder. The last step is to darken the bottom part under the bridge and main entrance on the edge of the coast using Curves, in the same way you did before.



Adding more elements Start refining your image with assets & effects

Create water surface

09 To create the water surface you can use different techniques. We recommend using 'Flood' by Flaming Pear (download this plugin from www.flamingpear.com/flood). Merge all layers on top of everything (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E). Press Cmd/Ctrl+A, then Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+C to copy the layer to the buffer, and then select Cmd/Ctrl+V. Go to Filter>Flaming Pear>Flood. Adjust the Curves, Brightness and Selective Color to make it more realistic.



Shade the concrete wall

10 We need to make the left part of the wall brighter. As you did before, use Brightness to achieve the desired effect. The right side has to be darker because of the shadow from the bridge. Also, play with the Curves to add more definition. Use dirt textures and add some leaks to achieve a more realistic effect (you can download a lot of textures in JPG or PNG format from www.cgtextures.com). Experiment with different blending modes, but for this kind of stuff you should use Multiply, Darken, Color or Soft Light mode.





Adjust the right facade

11 Create a new layer and change the blending mode from to Multiply. Use a red colour and start painting over the top and middle horizontal facade frame parts with a sharp brush. Use Brightness, Selective Color and Hue/Saturation adjustments to make the red colour more natural. The left facade should be darker because of the shadow. Also, add random building textures to the glass facade as reflections from the environment to create realistic detail.



Build the coastwalk alley

12 There are four separate layers with trees. You can download a lot of tree cut-outs for free, from websites like gobotree.com or cgtextures.com. Make sure that the left part is really dark, as it adds nice depth to the bottom. To add shadows you can use Levels or Brightness adjustment layers. Also, make all the trees less saturated using Vibrance and Selective Color to add more warm colours. The left side should be really bright because of the sun.



Add some people

13 Sometimes it's really hard to find the right people for the image. In this case it was easier because of the size. They are not as important as other parts, but they do add necessary detail to the big picture. Use Brightness and Selective Color to adjust each one of them. If needed, use a Hue/Saturation adjustment to make them fit in properly. You can lower the layer Opacity to 95-90% to make them less bold.



Final editing Important readjustments and finishing touches

Include more foliage

14 Arrange foliage on the bottom and upper levels of the building, but be careful not to overpower the main design. Placing the foliage is similar to the positioning of the trees. Always check your colour and black/white balance to make sure everything is working together as one. To add more light on the sunny side, create a new layer, clip it to the foliage layer, change the blending mode from Normal to Soft Light, set the Opacity to 40-50%, and start painting some highlights. Create some shadows on the left side, and perhaps place some birds on the top left side to counterweight the right building.



Check the balance

15 To easily check the black and white balance, create a new layer on top of everything and by pressing G (Paint Bucket tool), fill this layer with black. Change the blending mode from Normal to Color. Don't be afraid to adjust some assets or areas again and again. Your image is constantly evolving and you should work with this layer as much as possible to balance the image in the right way.



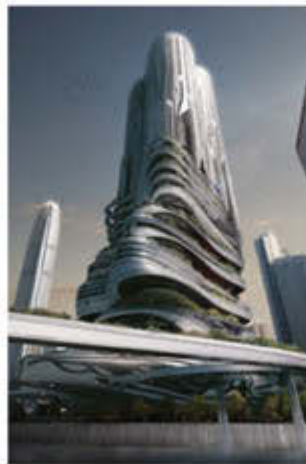
Add light effects

16 First of all, create a dark gradient on the bottom. It naturally leads your eyes to the middle part of the image. Use a Brightness adjustment layer to add more light to the sunny side of the right building. Do the same for the background skyscrapers and the top part of the main structure. Paint some highlights as you did with the foliage using the Soft Light method. Then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur to make them a bit blurry and play with the opacity of the white glows in the Screen blending mode.



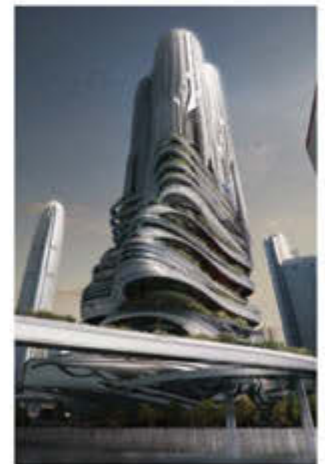
Finishing touches

17 This is the last phase of post-production. Add a flare effect to the right side. You can download a lot of different flare assets from different websites. Change the blending mode from Normal to Screen and adjust the Opacity to 80-90%. Adjust the Color Balance and Curves to make it more warm and bold, and add more Saturation to the middle part of the image. Darken the bottom part of the image and make it more cold using a Selective Color adjustment.



The final image

18 The last step is to add more Contrast and Chromatic Abberation (it's not necessary, but you can experiment with this effect). It's a type of camera distortion where the lens fails to focus all of the colours to the same convergence point, which makes the image look more realistic. Merge all layers on top of everything with Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Opt/Alt+E. Then, go to Filter>Lens Corrections and experiment with different values for the Distortion and Fringe, and this is your final image!



Add a dispersion pixel effect

Using a number of Photoshop brushes and techniques, learn to create a fantastic dispersion effect on a portrait image

The dispersion effect has become very popular in the last couple of years, and there are so many different ways to create it. Giving a subject a dispersion or splatter effect can create an incredibly dynamic image. From complex composites to simple layers, the effect can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be. The best part is, it's very quick and easy to do with a few Photoshop brushes.

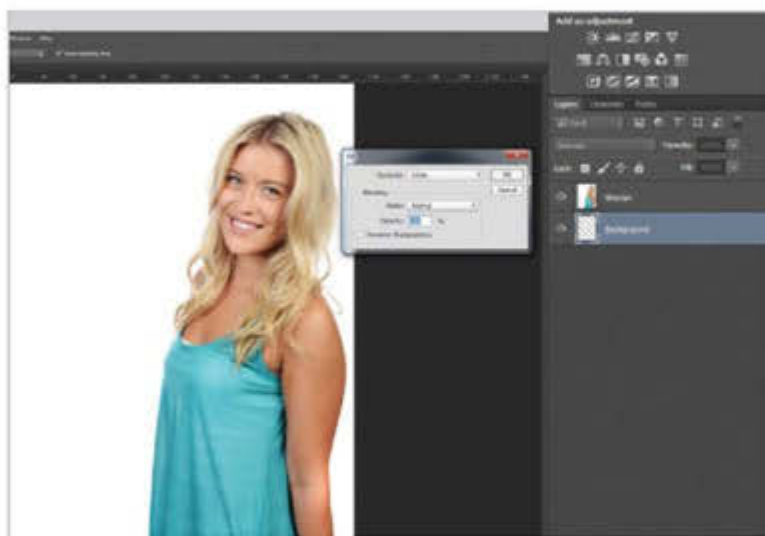
In this tutorial, you'll learn how to create the dispersion effect in Photoshop. We will separate the

subject from the background and create a copy, which will then be morphed with the Liquify tool. Using a combination of layer masks and brushes we will reveal the morphed layer while hiding parts of the original. The result will create a feeling that the subject is breaking apart.

If you want to try this tutorial on your own images you will need to bear a couple of things in mind: this technique works best on a full to two-thirds portrait of your subject. Your image will also need enough space to add the dispersion effect.

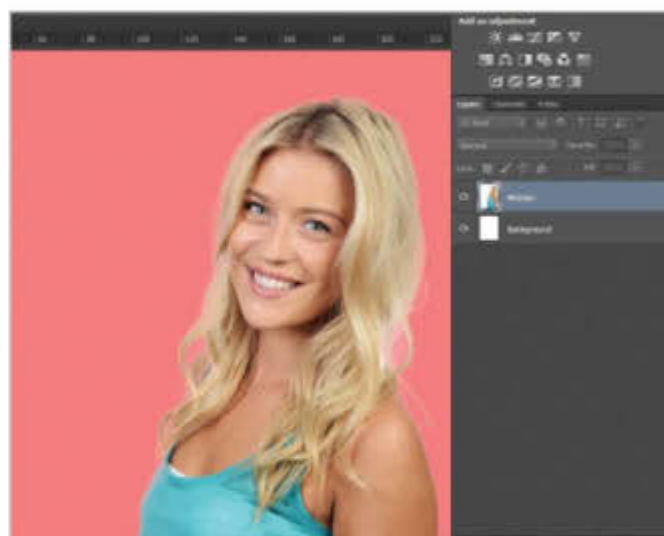


“Using a combination of layer masks and brushes we will reveal the morphed layer while hiding parts of the original. The result will create a feeling that the subject is breaking apart”



Create a background layer

01 Go to File>Open and select the file 'Woman.jpg'. Double-click on the layer to unlock it and rename it Woman. Go to Layer>New>Layer, name it Background and drag this new layer below the Woman layer. Go to Edit>Fill and fill this layer with white.



Select the woman

02 Click on the Woman layer and using the Quick Selection tool (W), select the woman. Click on Refine Edge on the tool menu and use the Refine Radius tool (E) to paint along the hair to select it. Click OK when you're done selecting the hair.



Source files
available





Delete pixels

03 Go to Select>Inverse and press the Delete key to delete the selected pixels. Press Ctrl/Cmd+D to deselect. Now, go to Layer>Duplicate layer (Ctrl/Cmd+J). You have two copies of the Woman layer. Name the top layer Woman and the second layer Effect.



Liquify the woman

04 To morph the copy of the woman, select the Effect layer and go to Filter>Liquify (Elements: Filter>Distort>Liquify). Using a large forward Warp tool (W), distort the woman to the left of the image.



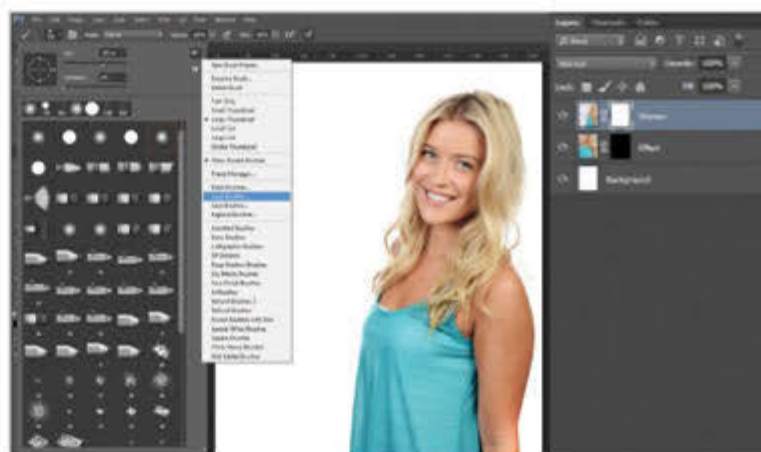
Remove the features

05 Select the Clone Stamp tool (S) and press the Alt/Option key to choose an area of clean skin to clone from. Proceed to clone out the eyes and mouth. You don't have to be perfect when cloning out the eyes and mouth.



Add layer masks

06 Now we need to hide this effect, so go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All. Select the Woman layer and go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Now we are ready to begin to paint the effect on our image.



Load up some brushes

07 Next we need to add some brushes to Photoshop. Select the Brush tool (B) and open up the Brush Preset Picker. Click on the small gear icon and select Load Brushes. Select the 'spatter brushes.abr' file and click OK.



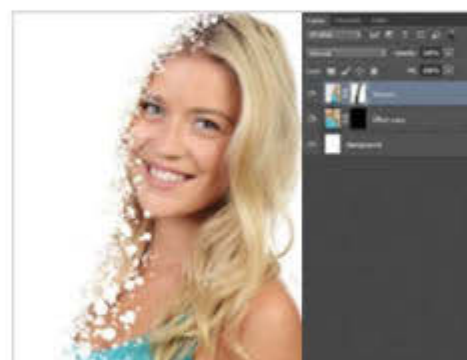
Edit the brush settings

08 Once the brushes are loaded you will see them in the picker. We used Spatter Brush 11. Paint with black on the woman's layer mask along the woman's left side, making the brush smaller as you get higher up her body.



Choose a different brush

09 Now swap to Spatter Brush 13. Set the brush size to 1100 and repeat step 8. Change the size of the brush to randomise the effect. Use a smaller brush for the head. You can also rotate the brush using the brush settings.



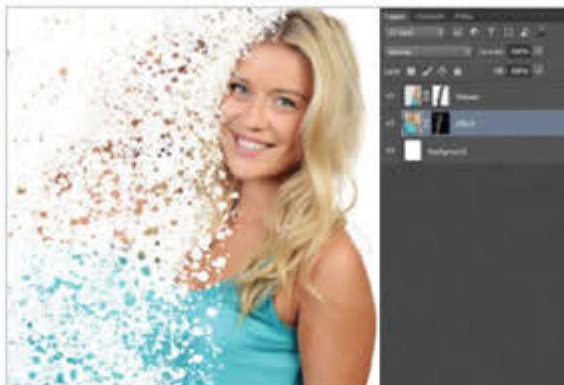
Build up the effect

10 Select the Spatter Brush 15 and set the Size Jitter to 50% and the Angle Jitter to 100%. Use this brush to remove the left edge of the woman. This time, only click once on the mask. You'll notice that the brush will rotate every time you click.



Clean up the mask

11 Select a soft round brush and, painting with white, clean up the mask. Remove any spatters that you don't like, such as any repeated spatters. Always pay close attention to the face; you'll want just the right amount in this area.



Repeat the effect

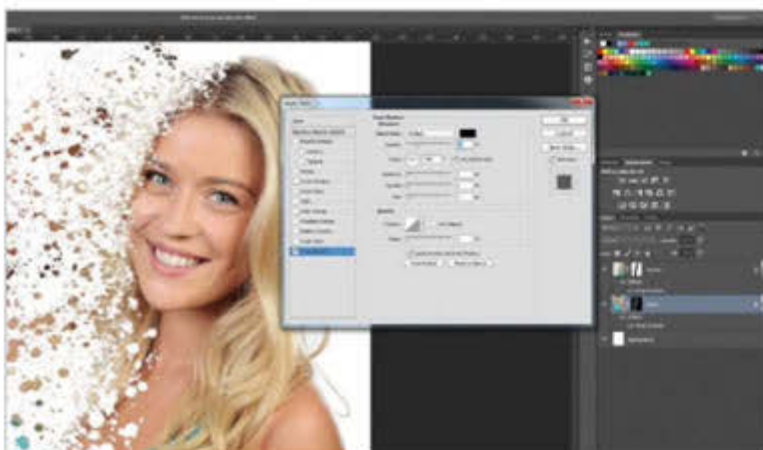
12 Select the layer mask of the effect layer and repeat steps 8 through to 11, painting in white. Make the brushes smaller towards the outer-left of the image. Remember to vary the brush sizes to randomise the effect.

Expert tip



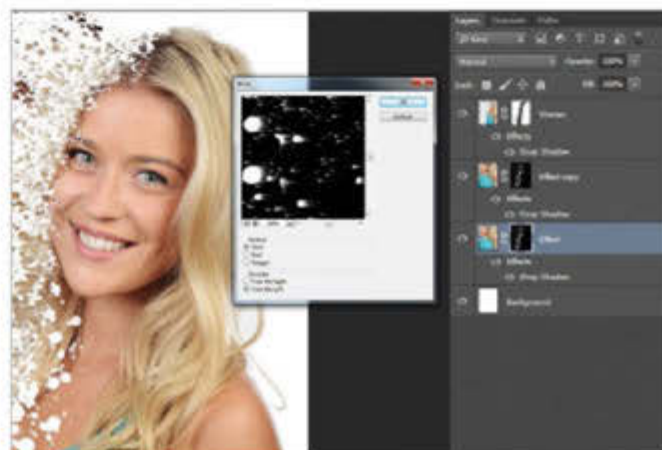
Try other brushes

We've got you set up with some brushes to try out this tutorial, but you don't have to use the supplied if you don't want to. You can always experiment with different brush shapes to see what you can come up with. Different brushes will create different looks, maybe try a themed brush for an event such as Christmas. Give it a go with your own brushes or download some from the internet and see what you can come up with.



Add a drop shadow

13 Go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow. Use an Angle of 180 with an Opacity to 25%. Set the Distance and Size to 5 pixels. Duplicate the Effect layer and select the layer mask of the first Effect layer. Repeat this for the Woman layer.



Add some wind effects

14 Making sure that the layer mask of the Effect layer is still selected, go to Filter>Stylize>Wind. Choose a Method of Wind and the direction from the left, then click OK. Set the layer's Opacity to 25%.

Expert tip

Save brush presets

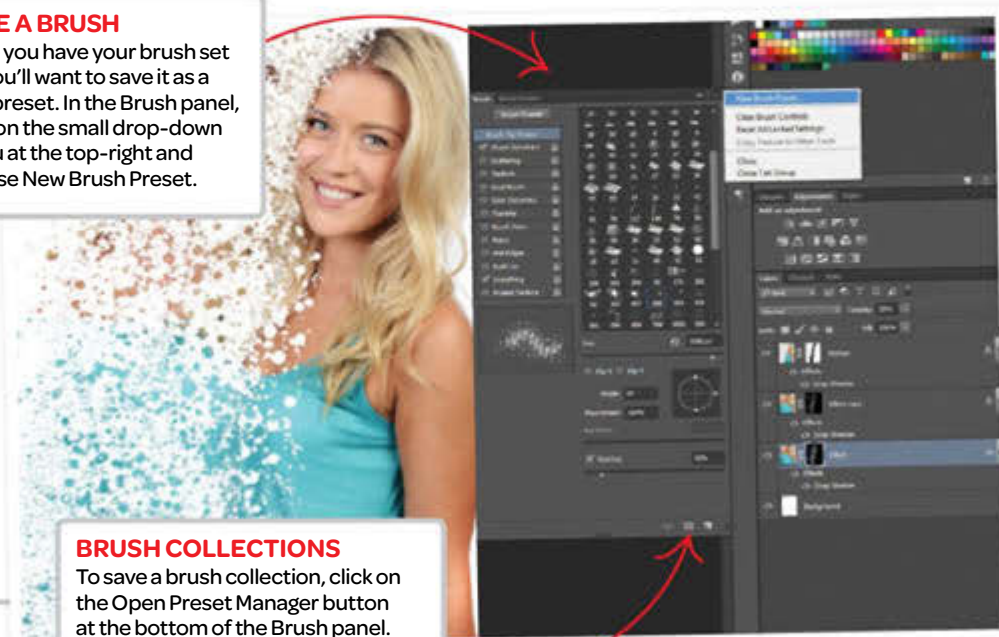
If you alter the brush's settings, for example the Size or Angle Jitter of the brush, it is not saved. If you select a different brush, or even the same brush, all of the settings that you have changed will return to the default settings set out by the brush preset. If you wish to keep the setting of a brush, you will need to save the settings as a new brush preset. This is very useful for building different brushes for different painting situations. You can even save out brush collections to share with your friends.

SAVE A BRUSH

Once you have your brush set up, you'll want to save it as a new preset. In the Brush panel, click on the small drop-down menu at the top-right and choose New Brush Preset.

BRUSH COLLECTIONS

To save a brush collection, click on the Open Preset Manager button at the bottom of the Brush panel. Select the brushes you want to save and click on Save Set.





WHICH COLOUR IS RIGHT?

A good rule is dark for shadows and light colours for highlights, but find the inverted colour of one to see the complementary colour for the other.

COLOUR-FILLED LAYERS

If you want to fill a layer quickly, press Alt/Opt+backspace to colour it with the Foreground colour in your swatch.



Source files available

Create a split tone effect

Use blend modes to give a classic finish to any photo in Elements!

Few photo effects can be both as creative and as subtle as a split-toned picture, but it is possible to throw a whole new spin on a photo just by adding two or three colours.

Split toning was first popularised back before colour pictures had even been invented. Photographers discovered that adding a deeper, richer colour to the shaded parts of an image, while introducing a colourful tint to the highlights would help to flesh out originally dull monochrome snaps. Despite people working digitally, it's a technique that has lived on through Photoshop.

Monochrome editing is just the start, though. By working on these techniques and getting the hang of editing photos with layers, you can bring bright, exciting filters to just about any photo you choose; in Photoshop you may use the Channel Mixer, but we're using layers and blend modes in Elements.

Let's discover exactly how to master split toning, and remember, our colours and styles are just a guide; experiment with your own shades, opacities and blend modes, and who knows what you'll come up with?



Start image



Splitting the colours Add colourful highlights and shadows to any picture



The highlights layer

01 For this particular picture, we're going to go with black and white. To desaturate, press **Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U**. Create a new layer, and fill in with a sepia kind of colour. The exact shade we went for is **#f3c08c**. Set Opacity to 50% and blend mode to Color.

The shadows layer

02 The first layer that you've created is going to change the colour of the highlights, and give them a depth and hue. To alter the shadows, fill a new layer with a dark blue colour and setting the blend mode to Overlay, and the Opacity to 80%.



The midtones layer

03 We're just going to add one more layer. Change the Opacity to 10% and set the blend mode to Soft Light; by filling this layer in a reddish pink (**#cc4c6a**), this will give the midtones just a touch of colour. Use your midtone layer as a subtle filter.

Colour tweaking

04 This might only be the start for you in your search for the perfect split-tone picture. The great thing about editing the picture with three separate layers, is that you can edit them all separately and tweak the layers until you're content with the effect.

Other colour options What other effects can a split-toning give?



Colour pictures

If you use a slight split tone on colour photos, you can bring out shades in your picture. Here, we've used purple on the shadows and beige on the highlights.



Seasonal moods

It's easy to create a seasonal shot with the right split tone. Here, we've used blues – **#8cd5f3** for the highlights and **#003655** for the shadows – to create a wintery scene.



Lomo-like shots

To give your picture a Lomo feel, use the setup from the tutorial, only with purple shadows and using a layer Blend Mode of Lighten instead of Overlay.

Pixel a portrait

Learn how to make a pixel-art portrait as though straight out of a 16-bit videogame

Anyone who grew up playing videogames on the Super Nintendo or Sega Genesis consoles will be familiar with the pixel-art style. Over the years, pixel art has become a valid art form in itself, not only for use in videogames.

In this tutorial, you will learn how to make a 16-bit style portrait in Photoshop. We'll mainly be using the Pencil tool and create a limited colour palette, then pixel over the iconic reference image using a variety of layers.

Pixel art was originally intended to save memory space and use small file sizes, but also cram a lot of detail into a very small area.

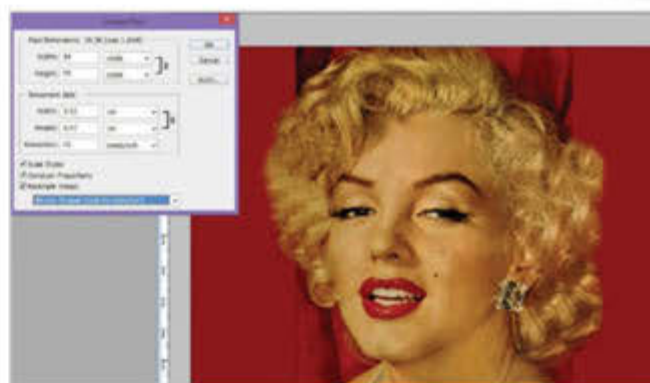
This all helped videogame developers get lots of artwork into small cartridge sizes. To carry on the tradition, we will be working small and zooming in a lot.

For this tutorial, a reference image of Marilyn Monroe is being used but you could use a photo of yourself, a friend or anything you fancy, really, and create your own pixel-art portrait, perhaps for a social-media profile picture or a piece of art for your wall. The final image will be small enough to use as an avatar on forums or social networks, but you can increase the resolution of pixel art up to any size without losing fidelity.



Change the resolution

01 Originally being used on-screen, pixel art should always be created at 72ppi, so open up your reference image, go to Image> Image Size (Ctrl/Cmd+Opt/Alt+I) and change the Resolution to 72.

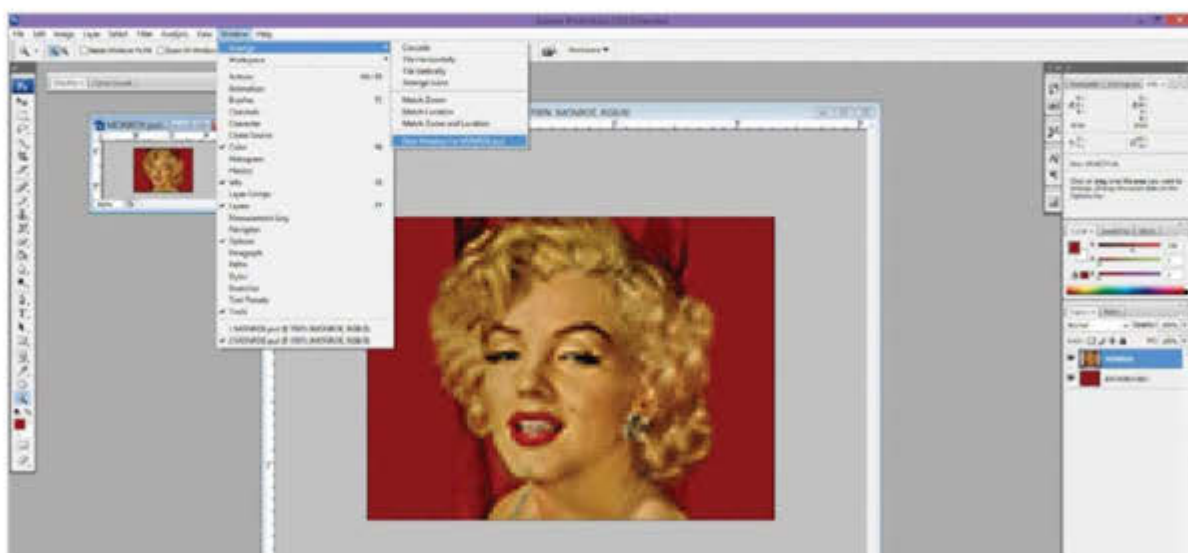


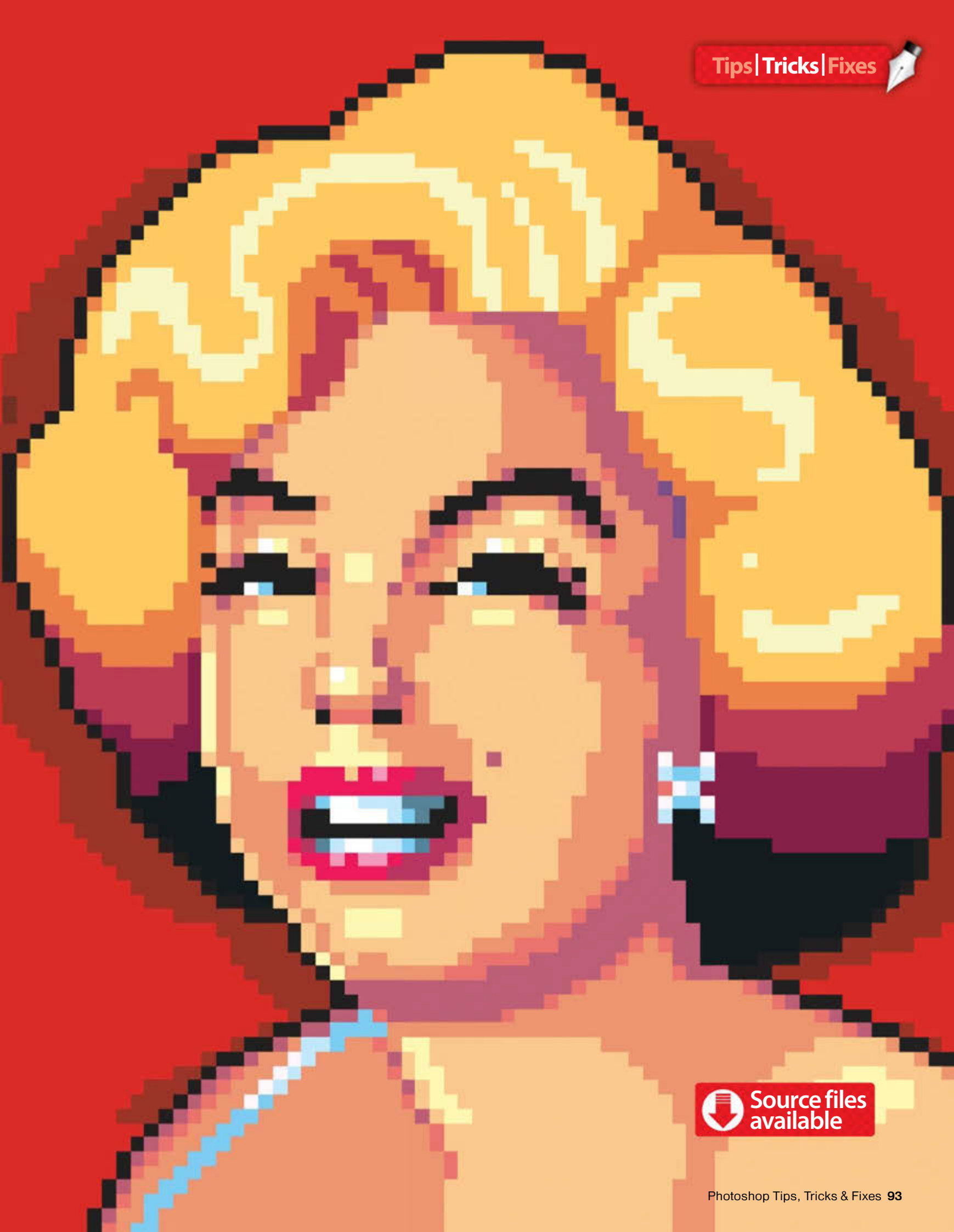
Resize the image

02 You need to resize the image to make it smaller before pixeling over the top. Open Image Size, and change the largest measurement (Width or Length) to 100 px. Save this as a new file so we still have the original size for reference.

View the image

03 It's helpful to zoom in and view your image at the same time when creating pixel art. To do this, go to Window> Arrange and select a new window from the drop-down. This will give another window with a 100% size version of your image.





Source files
available

Expert edit

Colour theory



Avoid adding black

01 Here, black has been added gradually to the original colours to darken them, instead of picking straight from the Color Picker.



Compare the results

02 You can see how adding black to colours makes them muddy. The image on the right (with no black added to colours) is much more striking.



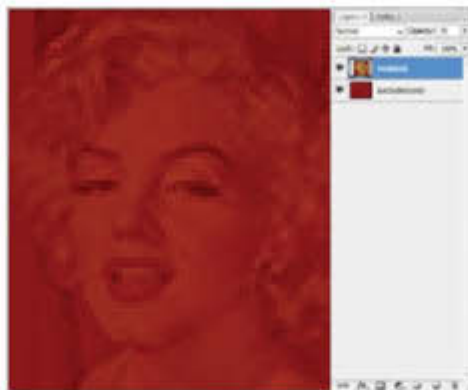
Blue on white

03 Take a closer look at the shading on the teeth. Instead of adding black to white, the teeth have been shaded with blues, which gives a more pleasing effect.



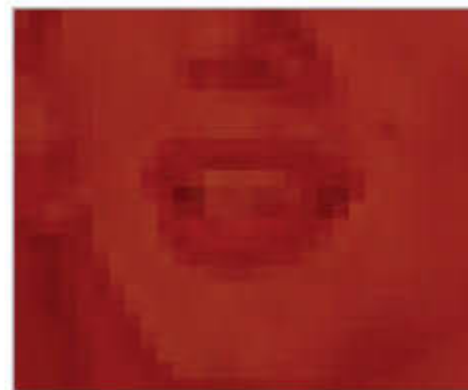
Skin tones

04 Try to add blues or purples to your skin tones instead of black. If you look at shadows in real life they take on the colours around them.



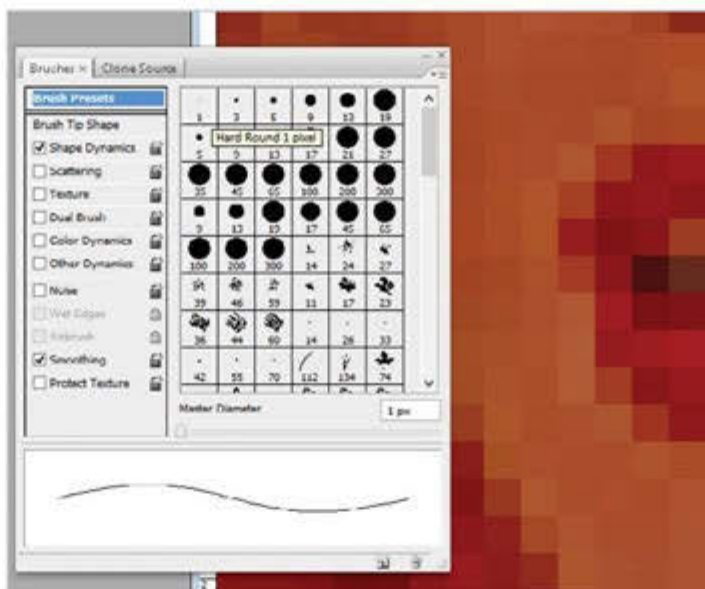
Set up

04 Create a new background layer by selecting New Layer from the Layers palette and move this new layer to the bottom. Fill it with a colour of your choice. Now select the layer above (with the portrait photo) and set the Opacity to 25%.



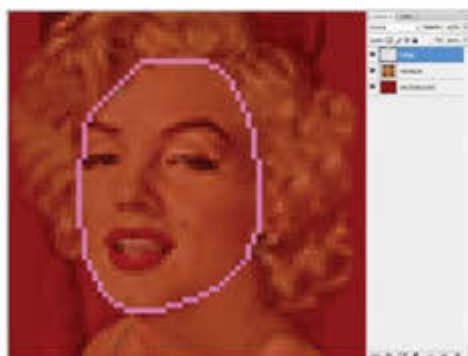
Zoom in

05 If you zoom in to your image it will become a collection of large pixels. Usually this is to be avoided but in this case you can use these as a guide to draw over. Select New Layer from the Layers palette and call it Head.



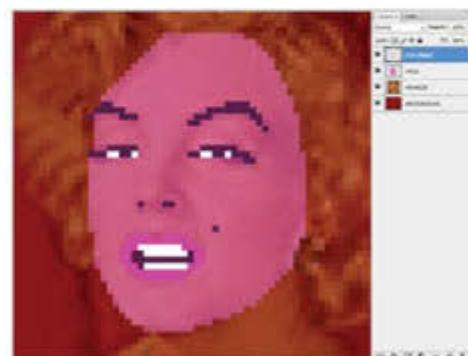
Select the Pencil tool

06 We will use the Pencil tool to create the pixel art, because it has a hard, non anti-aliased edge. Select the Pencil tool and open the Brushes palette (Window>Brushes) and make sure the Pencil tool is set to the smallest pixel brush.



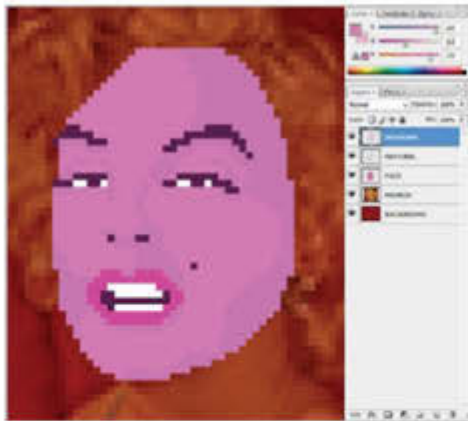
Start on the head

07 On the Head layer, draw pixel by pixel around the edge of the head. It works well to do the first stages in magenta, so you can concentrate on the shapes rather than the final colours. Once you're done, use the Fill tool and fill in your shape.



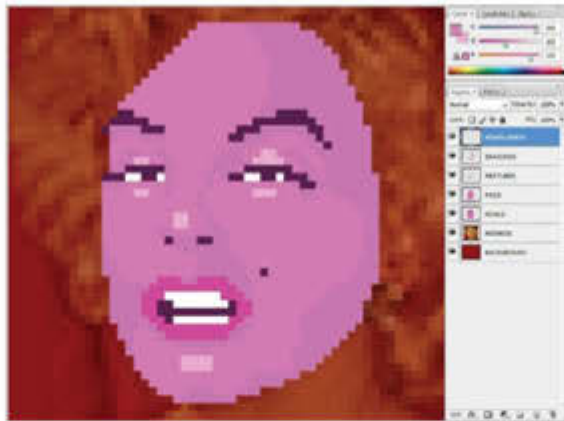
Add the features

08 Create another new layer on top of your head shape and name it Features. Change the Opacity of your Head layer to 50%, then start to pick out the features with the Pencil tool on the Features layer, picking relevant colours.



Pick out the shadows

09 Create another layer and call it Shadows. Set the Opacity of the Head layer back to 100%, and start to pick out the shadows with the Pencil tool using a darker magenta colour.



Lighten it up

10 Create another layer and in a similar way to the Shadows layer, add highlights to the face using a lighter magenta colour. Picking out squares of colour can be very effective. Remember pixel art is about hinting at detail rather than cramming too much in.

Expert tip



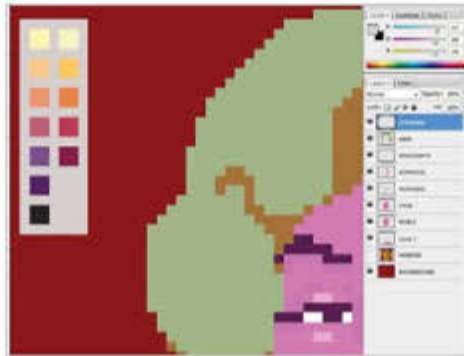
Don't reduce it

Usually any changes to image size will affect image quality, often for the worse, but one of the great things about pixel art is that you can keep increasing the size without losing any image quality. However, you should try to avoid reducing the size. This is because a pixel is the smallest dot that your monitor can show. This means that reducing pixel art can lead to odd-shaped pixels because Photoshop tries to make the original image out of less pixels.



Work on the hair

11 Create another layer, call it Hair, and block out the shape and shadows for the hair. Use what you learnt when making the face, but don't worry about drawing every strand. It's better to block and hint at detail rather than try to draw everything.



Start colouring

12 Let's create a colour palette layer and start colouring in our pixel-art creation. Create a new layer, call it Colours, and each time you use a new colour, place a small square of this colour in this space. Try to order the colours from light to dark.



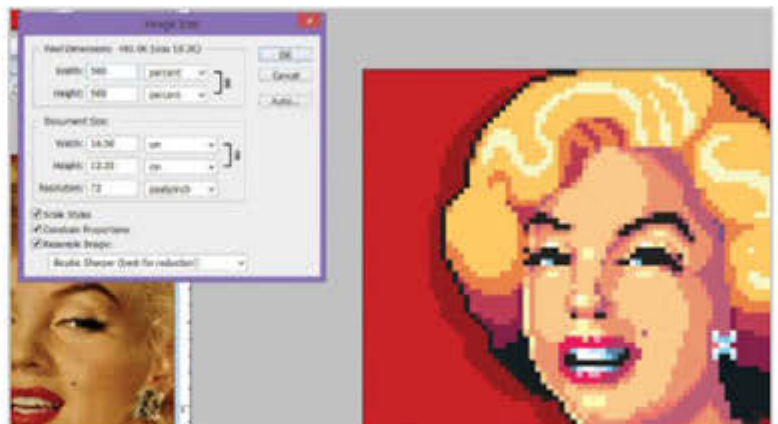
Magic Wand

13 Select all your layers in the Layers palette, apart from the background and Colours layers, and Merge Layers. Then with the Magic Wand tool, click on the main skin area. Go to Select>Similar. This will grab all instances of that skin colour. Fill this with your chosen skin colour.



Add shading

14 After you have filled in all your basic colours (using step 13 for each one), zoom in to your image and add darker and lighter shades. Don't go too crazy and try to keep the amount of colours you are using to under 16.



Resize and finish

15 Don't be afraid to delete sections and re-colour to create an image that you're happy with. We can scale pixel art up to any size. Go to Image>Image Size>Nearest Neighbor, and then change the dimensions to 500%. This will give chunky pixels.



BACKGROUND MERGE

The mountain background was incorporated into the primary image of the car, and the consolidated layer converted into a Smart Object.

PAINTED WINDSCREEN

The interior of the vehicle was made less visible by using the Eyedropper tool and a soft brush. This added realism as well as an element of mystery.

Build dynamic composites

Inject some drama into your composites with these fail-safe editing techniques

Dramatic composite images are frequently used in promotions and advertising, often containing unique camera angles and a moody colour palette to entice viewers. Creating a similar image in Photoshop can be a time-consuming task, but there are plenty of techniques that can be leveraged to create a fantastic result.

One of the best ways is to work in a non-destructive manner, by utilising layers, Smart Objects and masks. The scope of our editing efforts will be on the preparation of the primary image, using layer masks to remove unwanted aspects of the image background. Additionally, specialised blending techniques will be used to

seamlessly incorporate a dramatic new vista into the background. Lastly, shadow and highlight adjustments, some radial blur and a 'light leak' overlay will be used to provide an impactful, cinematic quality to the completed image.

Remember that skills will develop greatly the more you put them into practice.

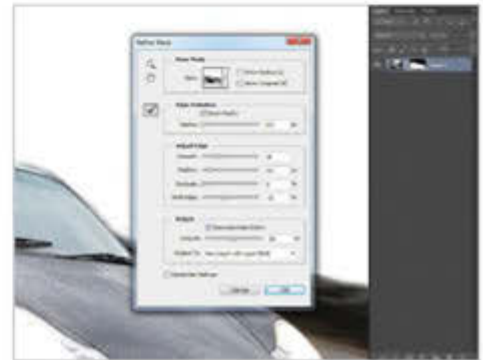


Source files
available



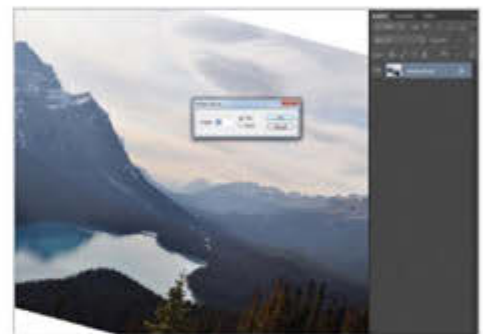
Erase the background

01 Open the image and select Layer>Layer Mask>From Transparency. Select the black from the Color Picker as the Foreground colour and, using a soft brush, carefully erase unwanted aspects of the image background.



Apply a defined edge

02 When the majority of the background has been erased, choose Select>Refine Mask and enter the following: Smart Radius: checked; Smooth: 28; Feather: 2.6; Shift Edge: -21; Decontaminate Colours: checked (50%). Refine Mask allows for a defined edge.



Prepare the background

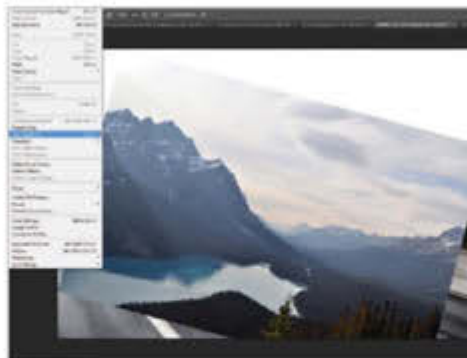
03 Open the landscape image, select Image>Image Rotation>Arbitrary. Rotate the canvas 15 degrees clockwise (CW). This will allow the background to appear at a similar angle as the car. Create a layer mask (outlined in step 1) and erase the white sections of the rotated image.

Expert tip



Plan ahead

When planning to create a composite image in Photoshop, select source images that complement each other in terms of sizing, subject and base colours. A careful bit of foresight can go a long way in order to create an artistic blended image that is natural looking and aesthetically appealing. Where appropriate, applying atmospheric effects such as snow particles and lens flare can really add a dramatic, cinematic quality to the finished product.



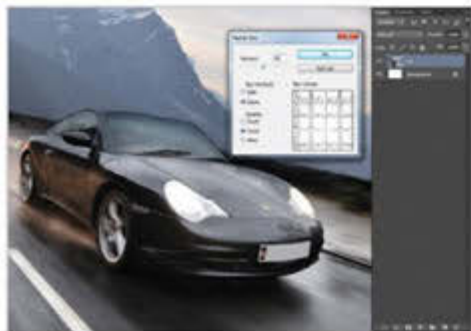
Import the background

04 Import the mountain background into the main car document, and with the mountain layer selected, convert to a Smart Object. Choose Edit>Free Transform, and expand the X/Y axis of the mountain image to make it larger. Once satisfied with the size, hit enter to apply.



Blend the background

05 Rasterize the mountain background layer, and change its blending mode to Multiply. With that same layer selected, use the Eraser tool (Hardness 0%) and carefully eliminate overlapping aspects of the mountain background that cover the car. Vary the size of the Eraser brush when working on areas that require detail.



Apply Radial Blur

06 Select Merge Down to incorporate the mountain background into the primary image of the car, and then convert the consolidated layer into a Smart Object. Select Filter>Blur>Radial Blur, and position the blur centre marker on the nose of the car, Amount at 50 (Zoom, Good Quality).



Radial Gradient Mask

07 With the Smart Filters (Radial Blur) object selected, choose the Gradient tool, and make certain that black is the Foreground colour. Confirm the gradient map selection is Black & Transparent, and select the Radial gradient option. Click and hold on the car's hood and move the radial gradient selection to the left.



Reduce the opacity

08 The Radial Blur effect will have to be reduced, so click on the parallel bars icon located in the Smart Filters/Radial Blur layer object, and a Blending Options sub-window will open. Lower the Opacity to the desired level (50% works well) and click OK to apply changes.



Adjust Highlights & Shadows

09 Choose Select>All, followed by Edit>Copy Merged and then File>New. Paste the selection into the new working area. Create a duplicate layer of the Background and select Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Adjust Highlights to -48 and Shadows to +63 and click OK to apply changes.



Add a gradient

10 Select Merge Down to incorporate the Highlights & Shadows layer. Make a duplicate layer of the Background and label it Gradients. Choose the Gradient tool (with transition from Black to Transparent) and create a small gradient at the bottom of the image, release under the car hood.



Create a vignette

11 Duplicate the Gradients layer, and name the layer Vignette. Go to Filters>Camera Raw Filter, and select the Effects button in the Camera Raw sub-window. Set the Post-Crop Vignetting option to -40 and click OK. Adding a subtle vignette adds moody contrast and focus.



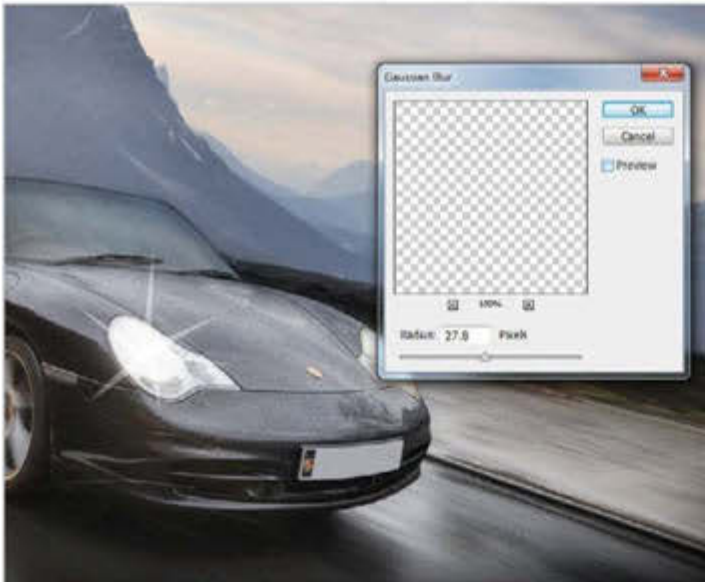
Add light leak

12 Next, open the image named Light Leak and apply it to the car document. It will appear as a separate, fourth layer. Rename it from Background to Light Leak and change its blending mode to Screen. Reduce the Opacity to a desired effect; somewhere near 20%.



Introduce special effects

13 The gradient, vignette and light leak can be considered as finishing effects, or subtle aspects that enhance the overall image by adding a dramatic flair. More punchy effects can be added, such as enhancing the tonal contrast of the clouds, or adding a lens flare.



Create headlights

14 Flatten all layers, and then create a new blank layer. Select the Polygonal Lasso tool, and create an irregular star pattern around a headlamp. Paint within the star selection using various shades of white – and then blur using the Gaussian Blur tool. Change blend mode to Soft Light or Overlay.



Merge layers

15 Select Merge Down to join the headlight's layer with the car image, then create a duplicate layer of the Background. Increase the magnification to around 50%, and mask the windshield using the magic wand.

Paint the windscreen

16 Use the Eyedropper tool to select the colour variations within the windshield, and carefully paint using a soft brush at reduced Opacity so that the interior of the vehicle becomes less visible. This adds an element of mystery and realism.

Expert edit

Important tips



Use similar colours

01 When editing an image, use neutral tones or sampled colours when creating gradients or painting highlights. This allows for overall uniformity, adding to the realism.



Create focal points

02 Using subtle gradients and vignettes can reduce the impact of a bright background, and will draw the viewer's eye to the primary subject, in this case, a speeding sports car.



Consider light sources

03 When selecting a sky to incorporate into a composition, be mindful of tone, colour and direction of light. Horizontally flip a background to match light direction.



Tweak the levels

04 As a final step, don't be afraid to make adjustments to the curves or saturation of an image. Slight tweaks of levels can provide a nice finishing touch to a composite.



Forge a custom lens-flare effect

Add colour and creativity with nothing but a ray of light

Most Photoshop and Elements users have a mixed relationship with the lens-flare effect. On the one hand, it's a fantastically simple and potentially restrained photo fix, but on the other, there are only four preset flares to choose from. How can you be consistently original with only a handful of options?

The obvious answer to this particular dilemma is to do a search, and source them from elsewhere. There are countless lens flares available on the internet, which are perfect for a swift solution, but creating your

own is a great creative project that can be so much more rewarding. Simply study other lens flares, build up an idea of what you want in yours, and by relying on opacity and blend modes, and combining these with colour, you too will be able to create a fresh, new lens flare that can be used in any photo.

The great news is that you need little more than a brush and creativity. After all, the more limited a feature, the more creative you can be as an artist.



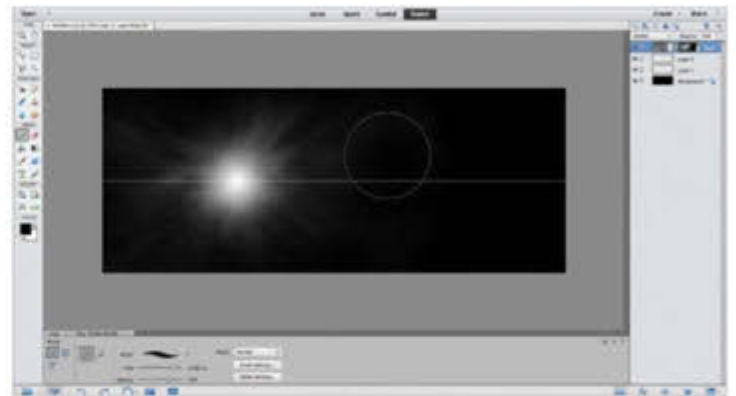


Artistic flare Use brushes and blending to bring light to life



Make a mark

01 Fill the Background layer in black. Draw a horizontal line through the centre. Create a new layer and with a soft, white brush, about a third of the way in from the left, make a mark.



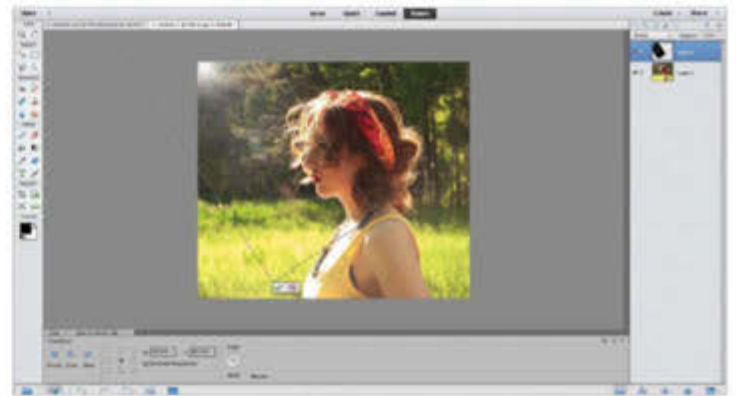
Add shine

02 Go to Filter>Render>Clouds, then Blur>Radial Blur; set the Amount to 100. Edit the blend mode to Screen, and place the centre is over the light. Add a mask, soften edges with a black brush.



Scatter spheres

03 Use the Elliptical Marquee and a soft brush to add in extra bits of light. Change the blend modes of these layers to Screen, and alter Opacities. Experiment with size, colour and overlap until you build up a longer lens flare from the circles.



Place onto photo

04 Merge the whole thing together when you're finished, minus the layer with the guide line, and copy, before pasting the lens flare onto your picture. Change the blend mode to Screen, resize as necessary and rotate to give the beam of light a direction.

Other flare options Experiment for even more inventive effects



Coloured light

Why not incorporate colour into yours for a somewhat surreal tone? Add a layer over the layer of light, and colour in over the flare, before setting the blend mode to Soft Light. This is great when used with artificial lights.



Hollow spheres

Another popular effect is to brush in the colour of your sphere, before grabbing the Eraser and hollowing out the circle. This creates a nice light arc, which can be seen on the Photoshop preset lens flares.



Hexagons

We have used circles, but hexagons are another option. Simply draw them or paste them and soften the sides. It gives a nice bokeh effect, and can be used both instead of, and in combination with, the circles.



Make macro composites

Learn to shoot and edit your own macro masterpiece in minutes

You don't have to be an excellent photographer to create extraordinary images. Photoshop – and Elements, for that matter – provides a plethora of fantastic tools that can transform the most basic shots into stunning works of art.

In this tutorial, we'll show you how to create a spectacular macro masterpiece. This striking effect, which requires a lot of patience and

practice to capture in-camera, is actually simple to re-create in Photoshop. Follow along with our guide as we start by taking you through the steps to shoot your own close-up photos at home, before showing you how to seamlessly combine both images for a flawless and realistic macro effect.

You'll discover more about Photoshop's tools along the way and get used to how

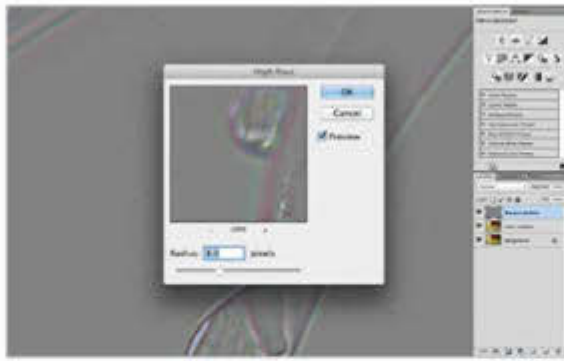
they work with some easy steps, from creating a cutout using Selection tools to warping perspective with the Transform function. We'll show you how to blend two images using blurs and colour adjustments. The basic steps you'll learn here can be applied to future Photoshop projects, so you will gain invaluable skills as well as an eye-catching image.





Crop in closer

01 Open your background image in Photoshop and start by cropping in closer to the water droplet using the Crop tool. Select the entire image first and while holding down the Shift key to constrain proportions, slowly drag up one of the four corners. Now hit Enter to confirm.



Sharpen the droplet

02 Sharpen the image so that the main droplet appears crisper. Start by duplicating the Background layer. Now go to Filter>Other>High Pass and input 8px in the pop-up box. Click OK and then change this layer's blending mode from Normal to Overlay. Also reduce the layer's Opacity to around 70% to soften results.

Expert tip



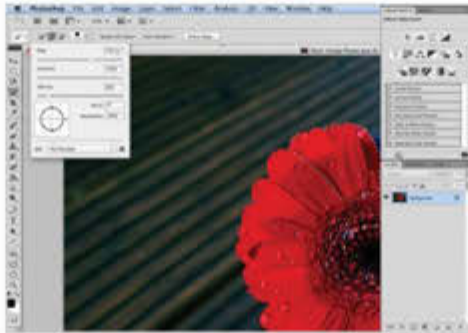
Create a clear drop

It's good to clear the droplet of any existing refractions before you position a flower in it. You can do this using the Clone Stamp tool that's located in the tools palette on the left. Select a small brush size with a smooth edge and 80-100% Opacity. Within the droplet, select an area that's clear of refraction by selecting it while holding down the Opt/Alt key. You can now carefully brush over refractions you want to remove using the area you have just cloned.



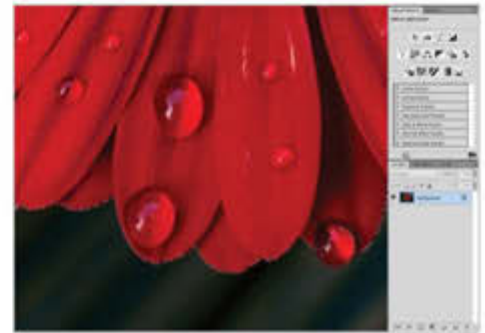
Enhance colour hues

03 Improve colour hues in the image via the Create New Fill Or Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and select Hue/Saturation. In the pop-up box, select a colour hue from the Masters dropdown menu and then slowly increase the Saturation slider for each.



Make a selection

04 Open your second flower image and select the Quick Selection tool from the Tools palette on the left. Adjust the brush size at the top of the screen and then slowly begin painting over the entire flower. Photoshop will pick up the edges of the petals pretty accurately.



Add to the selection

05 Zoom in on the flower and check the petal edges. If parts of the flower have been missed, readjust your brush size and ensure Add To Selection is clicked at the top. Paint over areas you want to include. To remove areas, use the same process but change to Subtract From Selection.



Refine the edges

06 Once the selection is made, go to Refine Edge. In the pop-up box, tick the Smart Radius box and increase the Radius slider to ensure each edge is selected. Now increase the Feather slider to smooth out the petal edges so that the flower blends realistically within the water droplet shot.



Create a new layer

07 Create a separate layer of the selected flower, which can be added to the water droplet image. Go to Layer>New>Layer Via Copy. Now select the new layer within the Layers palette and using the Move tool, drag it over to the open water droplet image. It should now appear as a new layer within this file.

Expert edit

Capture close-up



Add water droplets

01 Using a pin, apply droplets to the flower petals, including the edges. Glycerin or sugared water works particularly well, as it tends to stick and stay longer than regular tap water.



Fill in the shadows

02 Shoot by a well-lit window to make the most of the natural light and help prevent the camera's flash from firing. Use some white card to bounce natural light into the shadow.



Select macro mode

03 Select the Macro mode on your camera's mode dial or on the menu – this setting enables you to focus and shoot closer to a subject. Put the camera on a tripod or an even surface.



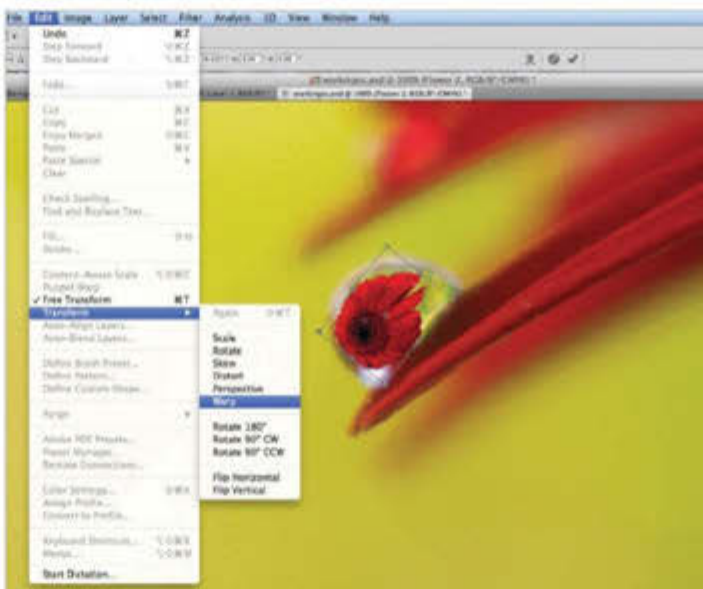
Focus correctly

04 Try to get very close to the main droplet. Position the focus point over the droplet and half depress the shutter to lock focus. Once it appears pin-sharp, release the shutter to shoot.



Adjust the size

08 Shrink the flower so that it fits within the droplet via Edit>Free Transform. Hold down the Shift key as you drag in one of the corners so that the flower reduces to an appropriate size within the main droplet. Hit Enter to confirm the action and then move the flower into place.



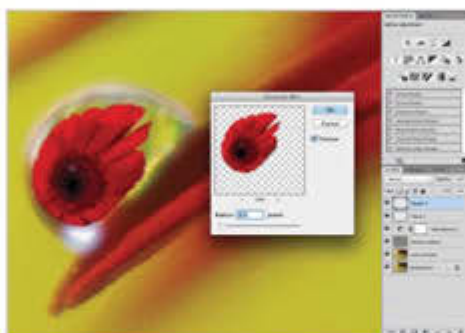
Warp the shape

09 Realistically the flower will need to appear distorted in the droplet. To replicate the effects of refraction go to Edit>Transform>Warp. Now alter the overlaying grid so that half of the flower's petals extend towards the top edge of the droplet, while the rest of the flower falls to the bottom. Click Confirm when happy.



Repeat the effect

10 Repeat the distorted flower effect in the surrounding droplets. However, be mindful that each droplet's shape will vary, so warp the flower accordingly. As these droplets are also not the focal point, they will naturally appear slightly blurred. Once you've placed each flower, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur for a softer look.



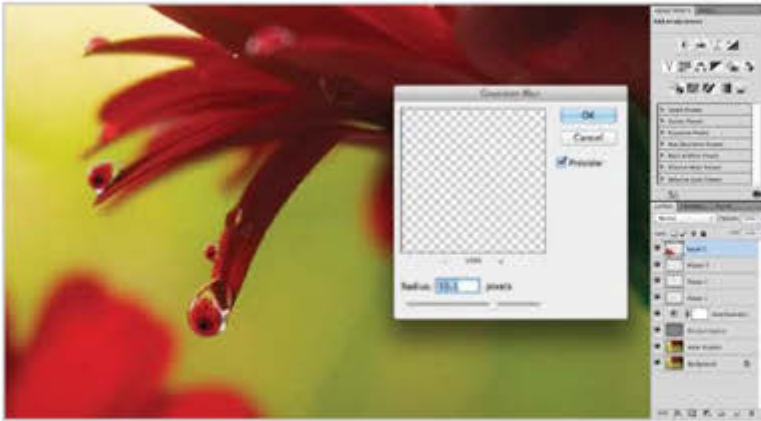
Blur the flower

11 In the Gaussian Blur pop-up box, tick the Preview box to see the adjustment. Now increase the Radius slider to realistically blur the flower layer so that it shares the same depth-of-field effect as the droplet it is positioned within. Repeat for all flower layers except the flower in the main droplet.



Realistic results

12 To capture this image in camera, the flower that's refracted within the droplets needs to be positioned at the very back. Create this illusion by adding another flower layer and this time increasing its size so it appears on scale with the main flower in the photo via Edit>Transform.



Create depth of field

13 Using the Move tool, position the flower in the bottom-left corner of the frame so that only a few petals are visible. Now create a realistic depth-of-field effect by blurring the layer by going to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. In the pop-up box, increase the Radius slider to around 55.1px and click OK.



Enhance overall contrast

14 Finally add some extra contrast to punch up the lighting and colour tones using Curves via the Create New Fill Or Adjustment Layer icon. Add two anchor points along the diagonal line and create a subtle S-shape curve. Now flatten the layers via Layers>Flatten Image and then save it.

Closer look Secrets to the artwork's success

Discover the tools used in Photoshop to create this macro effect

TRANSFORM TOOL
The Transform tool is located under File. Use it to change the scale of your flower and warp the perspective for a realistic refraction effect.

QUICK SELECTION
The Quick Selection tool makes selection simple. Use it to cut out your flower accurately, before adding it to your composite as a refraction effect.

ADJUSTMENTS MENU
Full of useful tools that will enable you to seamlessly blend multiple shots together through colour and lighting. Apply effects to the entire image or use clipping masks for select layers.

LAYERS PALETTE
Home to your working layers, you can control the effects and make adjustments to select areas of your image here.



MUTED COLOURS

Strip most of the colour in your image with the Hue/Saturation tool, which will give a convincing bleach bypass effect.

PUNCHY CONTRAST

Discover how to enhance contrast for a punchier result using the Black & White adjustment tool and layer blending modes.

Apply the bleach bypass effect

Give your modern colour captures a retro edge with a bleach bypass effect in Photoshop

Retro-inspired filters are all the rage in photography at the moment. Many of these effects – which can dramatically alter an image's colour range and overall contrast – were originally conceived in the traditional colour film darkroom, including the bleach bypass effect, which we will cover here.

Bleach bypass images are characteristically strong in contrast with very muted colour tones. In the darkroom days, the effect was achieved by skipping the bleaching step when processing colour film. This resulted in a black-and-white image over a colour image, hence its

powerful effect on a photo's contrast and colour tones. However, today it's much easier to replicate the bleach bypass result in the likes of Photoshop or Elements.

Follow this tutorial, as we show you how to create a convincing bleach bypass effect in Photoshop for yourself. The steps below are easy to follow and will also apply to those using Elements. You will be taken through the entire editing process, using adjustment layers and blending modes. What's more, it works well for all colour photos too, so dig out a still life, landscape or even portrait and get started.



Source files
available



Editing guide How to apply the bleach bypass effect

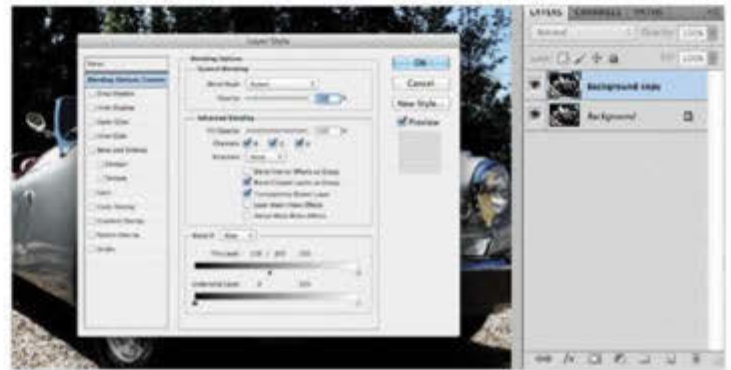


Increase the Contrast

01 Open your image. Select the Black and White adjustment tool from the 'Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer' tab. Once the dialog box opens, begin adjusting the coloured sliders that affect the tonal contrast within the image.

Reduce the Saturation

02 Change the Black-and-White layer's blending mode to Soft Light. Now select Hue/Saturation from the adjustment layer tab. Drag the Saturation slider towards the left to around -50. Now change the layer's blending mode to Saturation.



Duplicate the layer

03 Now flatten the layers for the next stage via Layer>Flatten. Duplicate your background layer. Re-name your new layer and then Cmd/Ctrl+right-click and select Blending Options. In the Layer Style dialog box, select the Screen blend mode.

Blend together

04 Now move down to the Blend If section. Hold down Opt/Alt and click on the black triangle. Drag one half of the triangle up to sit under the white triangle and now slowly move the other half of the triangle into the middle grey area. Click OK, then flatten the layers.

Alternative effects Use the Dodge and Burn tools to enhance other images



Control the contrast

Control the contrast by selecting the Curves Adjustment tool from the Adjustment Layer tab. Add two anchor points at either end of the diagonal line and pull to create an 'S' shape. Change the Curve layer's blending mode to Soft Light and continue with the steps.

Finishing touches

Once you've flattened all of the layers, add some finishing touches using the Dodge and Burn tools. Select the Dodge tool to lighten or Burn to darken. Adjust the brush Size, its Range and Exposure strength, and then use on select areas on your image.





Source files
available

Transform a portrait with blend modes

Create a portrait with the help of textures, adjustments, and the exhilarating Difference blend mode

Photoshop is the perfect tool for artists who like to blend images. Blend modes and layer masks allow us to quickly merge photos, textures and more to create artwork that would normally take longer to produce through more traditional means.

We'll take a model shot and transform it into an elegant mixed-media spectacle. After extracting her via the Quick Selection tool and Refine Edge, we'll place her atop the starting backdrop and begin the barrage of blending. A swirling splatter will be placed above the model, and we'll use the Difference blend

mode to create a spectral negative effect, controlled with a layer mask. Next, we'll add circles, blending them with Overlay to create a gritty mass. We'll make one of the circles part of the focal area by making it solid and bright.

From here we'll add halftone effects courtesy of mediamilitia.com, and throw in a flower or two. Once the base composition is complete, we'll merge layers and sharpen with Unsharp Mask. A Gradient Map adjustment layer resets the palette and Color Balance and Color Lookup elevate the appearance.

"A swirling splatter will be placed above the model, and we'll use the Difference blend mode to create a spectral negative effect, controlled with a layer mask"



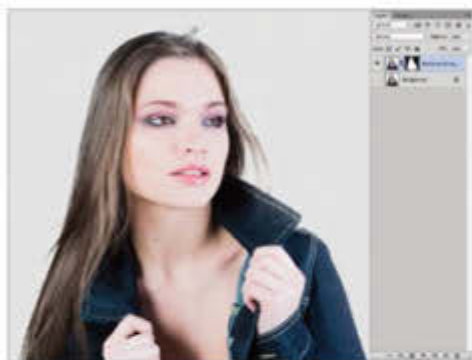
Select model

01 Open 'Model.jpg' from the resources. Use the Quick Selection tool to make a rough selection of the model. Click and drag to add to the selection (hold Opt/Alt to remove). Use square brackets to resize the brush. After completing the basic selection, go to Select>Refine Edge.



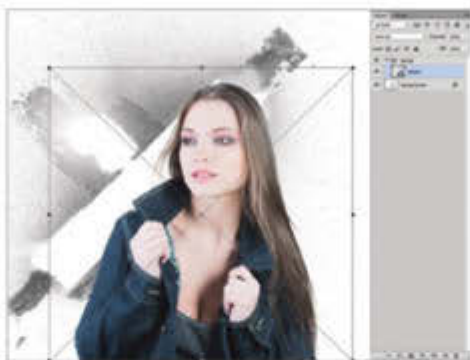
Refine Edge

02 Use the Refine Radius tool to paint around the hair and any other rough spots that were left. Use the keypad brackets to change the size of the brush as needed. Change View to On Black to check for fringe.



Output and clean up

03 For Output To, choose New Layer with Layer Mask. Click OK. If the mask needs any clean up, go ahead and use the Brush tool to paint white to restore missing areas, black to remove excess. Save as Model.psd.



Position model

04 Open 'Start.psd' from the resources. Go to File>Place, add Model.psd which you have just saved. Scale down and position the model. Right-click and choose Flip Horizontal. Now confirm the new placement.



Apply difference texture

05 Place 'MixedMedia.jpg'. Position above the model, confirm. Set blend mode to Difference. Opt/Alt-click the Add Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette to add a mask hiding all. Select the Brush tool. With a soft, round brush at 70% Opacity, paint white in the mask to reveal areas.



Add circles

06 Select the background layer. Use the Ellipse tool (set to Shape in Photoshop) to create several white and black circles (hold Shift to constrain in Photoshop). Set to the Overlay blend mode. Create a prominent circle to the left of the model with the colour #f696a6 and use the Normal blend mode.



Add halftone image

07 Select the model layer. Place 'Halftone1.png'. Scale down and position before confirming. Apply a layer mask with the icon in the Layers palette. With a soft, round brush at 60% Opacity, paint black in the mask to tone down.



More halftones

08 Continue to place the other halftone images. Reduce Opacity, apply layer masks and paint with black to hide areas. Duplicate as needed. Place another instance of 'Halftones1.png' above the model, set to Darken blend mode. Mask out areas so it only affects the face.



Extract flower

09 Open 'Flower.jpg'. Use the Quick Selection tool to select the flower. Right-click the Background layer, choose Layer from Background. Click OK. Click the layer mask icon in the Layers palette to create a mask based on the selection, hiding the surrounding areas. Save as Flower.psd.



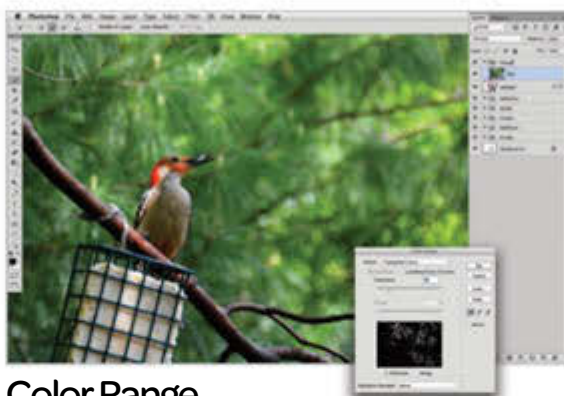
Add flowers

10 Back in the main document, place 'Flower.psd'. Scale and position before confirming. Place or duplicate as many times as you like. Position in front of or behind the model. Apply a layer mask and then hide areas if needed. Here we've used two flowers.



Merge and sharpen

11 Select the top layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to merge layers. In Photoshop, right-click on the layer and choose Convert to Smart Object. Go to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask (Elements: Enhance>Unsharp Mask). Set Amount to 100% and Radius to 2 pixels.



Color Range

12 If using Elements, skip this step and just place 'Grunge.png' and apply a layer mask. Otherwise place 'Bird.jpg'. Go to Select>Color Range. Set Fuzziness-35. Use the Eyedropper to sample an area to make a colour-based grungy selection. Click OK. Click the eye icon to the left of the bird layer to hide.

Expert tip



Anything goes

When creating compositions in the vein of mixed media, it's important to be able to let go of preconceptions about the subject of image assets and view them with an objective eye. Look for potential tonal or textural values that could positively contribute to your work. When stumped creatively with a piece, go ahead and throw some random elements into the mix and use masks, filters, and blend modes to integrate.



Color Range texture

13 For Photoshop CS and CC users, click the Create New Fill Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Solid Color. Pick white, then click OK. Photoshop Elements, click the mask and paint with black at 50-80% Opacity to hide unneeded texture.



Apply Gradient Map

14 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Gradient Map. Pick the Black, White preset. In the mask, paint black at 50% Opacity to restore colour in key areas such as the face and coloured circle.



Apply Color Balance

15 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button, choose Color Balance. For Midtones, (from top to bottom) set to -80, -10, -10. (In Elements, use a Photo Filter - Cooling Filter 82.) In the mask, paint black at 80% Opacity to remove in key areas.



Apply Color Lookup

16 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button, choose Color Lookup. Pick Crisp_Warm. Set the blend mode to Lighter Color. In Elements, use Photo Filter - Warming Filter (81) at 40%. Now add another Color Lookup - Fuji ETERNA 250D Kodak 2395.



Saturate colour

17 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Hue/Saturation. Pump Saturation to +25 (or more if you like). Click the mask, press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Paint back with white at 90% Opacity to selectively apply the increased saturation.



Source files
available

Generate a Lomo effect

Add retro colouring to any photo in just four simple steps

The Lomo effect is one of the most fun edits you can make on a photo – who doesn't love saturating and re-colouring pictures?

The technique originated in the early 1980s with analogue cameras and has taken on a life of its own in the Instagram age. This is perhaps down to the simple nature of the cameras that first took Lomo shots and the idea that Lomo photos should be spontaneous and natural. You don't have to be a photography or Photoshop pro to shoot fantastic Lomo shots and although there's a set formula for giving your

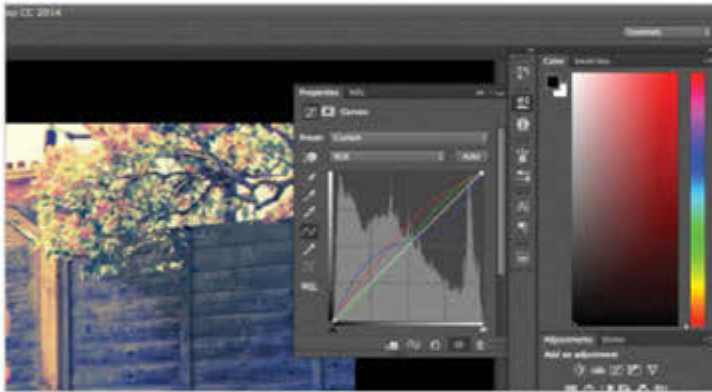
snap the characteristic bright colours and a retro vignette, there is a lot of room for experimenting with this tutorial.

Perhaps you want to bring out a certain colour – a technique which is explained in step 2. Or maybe you want to use this effect on a composition, to give the impression that it was captured in real life. Whichever way you want to use the Lomo effect, just remember to have fun with it and work through the techniques to see which one is the most effective for you.



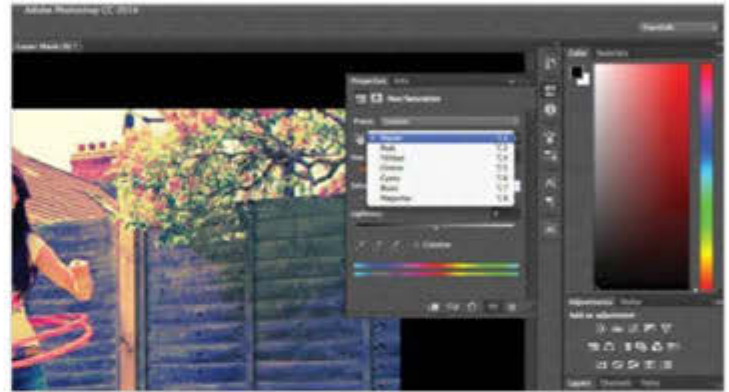


Learn Lomo Conquer the colouring of a classic Lomo effect



Change the Curves

01 Open the Curves palette. Change the Red, Green and Blue so they resemble the shapes in the image. Now bend the Master RGB curve slightly for added exposure.



Increase the Saturation

02 Click on the drop-down box in the Hue/Saturation adjustment and make each colour vibrant. They might need different Saturation levels and you may want to alter the Hue slightly.



Work on the blur

03 Click on the top layer and merge all into a new layer. Duplicate, select Gaussian Blur and blur the picture before adding a mask. Create and Mask, and brush over the subject to give focus with a big, soft black brush.



Add a vignette

04 Put everything into a new layer. Go to Filter>Lens Correction, and then custom; choose a dark vignette. Now you're done! You may wish to increase the Saturation even more or brush light leaks onto your finished picture by creating a new Screen layer.

More ideas Inspiration to try out in your Lomo photos



Fisheye

Simply change the image size to a square, use the Spherize Distort tool in the Filter menu and colour the edges of the image black to make your image more exciting.



Monochrome

The Lomo effect also edits exposure nicely. Why not experiment with the Desaturating filter and play with the histogram to create a beautiful monochrome picture?



Light leaks

Light leaks complement the simplicity of Lomo nicely. Simply brush pastel colours onto a new layer and change the blend mode to Screen for this sunny finish.

Style text effects

 Source files available

Learn how to stylise your own 3D typeface to fit with a nature environment

Have you explored 3D? Well now's the time! In these steps we will be delving into the realms of blending, colouring, lighting, 3D and brush work. Our main objective is to take a landscape and create 3D text on the landscape. We're then going to blend, manipulate and change this text in order to create a semi-realistic

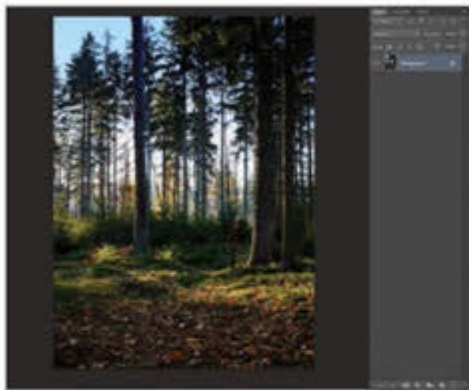
image. The great thing about the final product is that it's done entirely in Photoshop utilising Photoshop's 3D capabilities. These are often overlooked, but they can yield some stunning results.

We are also going to be learning about lighting and colouring and how they affect the final outcome of an image. So prepare

to learn how to combine a lot of different techniques to create an amazing image. You can apply everything we will learn throughout this tutorial to your own future projects. Hopefully you will learn about photomanipulation and the possibilities that can come from it. So, without further ado, it's time to get started!



Start image



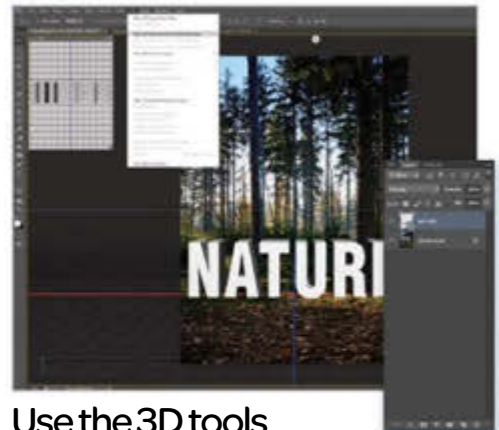
Open the document

01 Start off by opening your image into Photoshop by going to File>Open. Find 'Woods.jpg' and click Open. You should now see the woods image on the screen. Load up the Type tool by pressing T.



Inserting the text

02 Set white as the colour of your type, and enter the word 'NATURE' by clicking onto the image. You may position the text wherever you like, and feel free to use your favourite font. We used Helvetica LT Std Bold Condensed.



Use the 3D tools

03 With the text layer selected, go to 3D>New 3D Extrusion from Selected Layer. This will give your text a 3D effect, which will be useful later on when we begin manipulating the text.



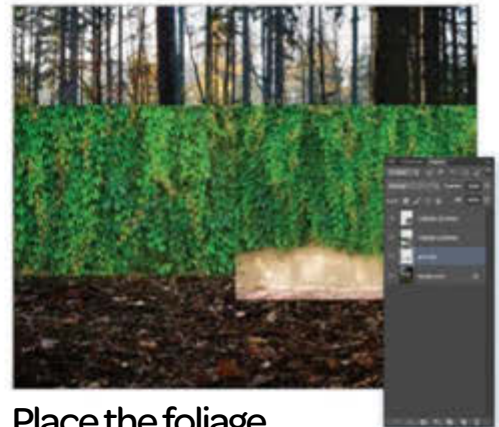
Extrusion Depth

04 The 3D palette should have opened up when you converted the text. If you don't see it, go to Window>3D. Click on the word Nature in this palette. In the Properties panel, lower the Extrusion Depth to between 350 and 400.



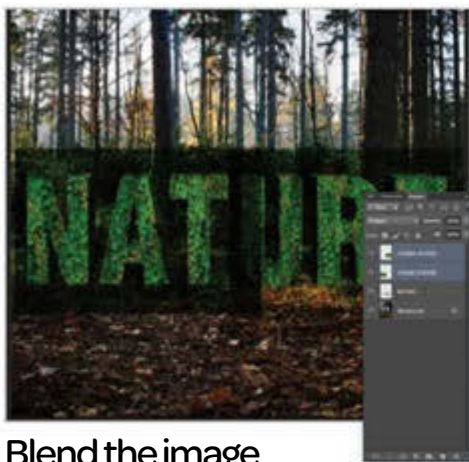
Rasterize the 3D layer

05 Now we need to make the 3D text more editable. In order to do this, we need to rasterize the image. Ctrl/right-click on the 3D text layer and click on Rasterize 3D.



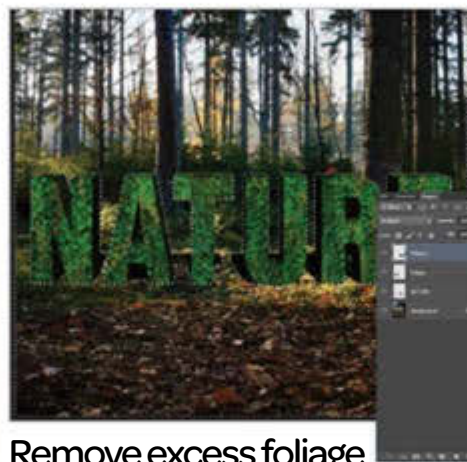
Place the foliage

06 Next we are going to place in our foliage images from the resources (see links in file). Download the files and then go to File>Place. Locate the specific images and then place them next to each other.



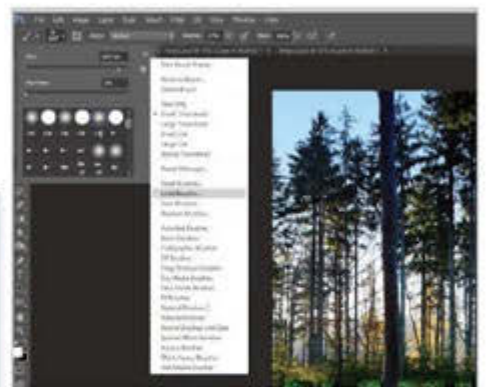
Blend the image

07 Our goal is to make the text look as realistic as possible. In order to do this, we need to blend the foliage into the text. Set both of the foliage layers to the Multiply blend mode.



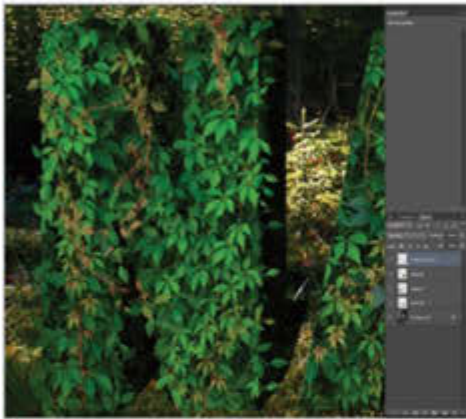
Remove excess foliage

08 With the Nature text layer selected, click on the Magic Wand tool in the toolbar. Click outside of the text. You will see marching ants around the text. Now on both foliage layers, hit Delete to remove.



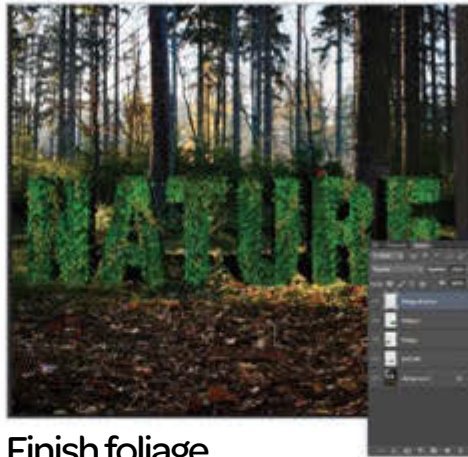
Load brushes

09 Download the foliage brushes in the links file with the resources. To do this, click on the Brush tool, then click on the drop down arrow in the top-left. Click on the gear icon, and then click Load Brushes. Pick the downloaded brushes.



Brush with foliage

10 To use the brushes, zoom in and on a new layer begin brushing with the foliage brushes using various greens around the letter 'N'. Use this to pad out the letter to make it as bushy as possible.



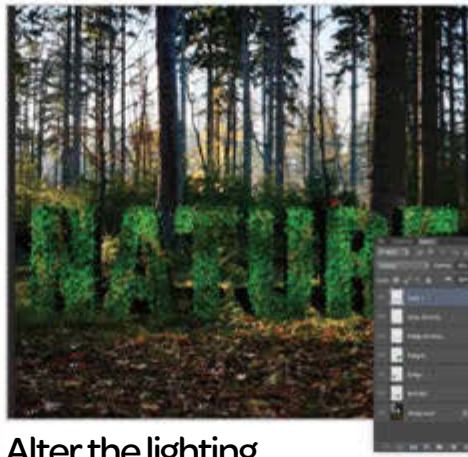
Finish foliage

11 To make this look realistic, we need to continue brushing around the rest of the text. Do not rush this! Zoom in and out while you are working to see what it looks like at normal size.



Brush in the grass

12 Just as we loaded the foliage brushes from earlier, we are going to load the grass brushes. Brush around the ground of the text. This is to blend the text into the ground to make it look more realistic.



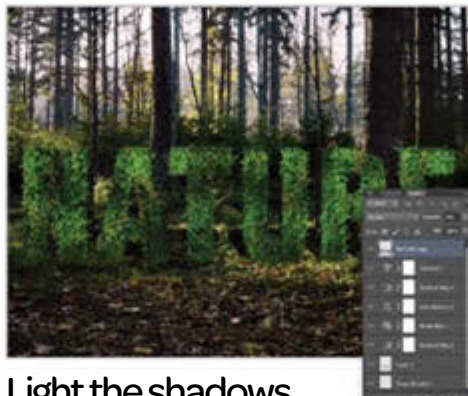
Alter the lighting

13 Use a white soft circle brush with 25% Opacity and a black soft circle brush at 25%, and draw over various parts of the image where you think the lighting should be coming from. Set this layer on Overlay.



Improve the colour

14 Check out the side steps to see how to add colour to this image. After you finish following the steps, add in a Vibrance adjustment and then set it to 75% to finish the colouring.



Light the shadows

15 Duplicate the original Nature layer, and drag it to the top. Go to Image>Adjustments>Invert. Set this layer to Screen at 8% Opacity. It will slightly lighten the shadows on the nature text.

Expert edit

Colour effects



Gradient Map

01 We are going to add a Gradient Map that is black to light green with a Hue blend mode at 33% Opacity. You can find the Gradient Map in Image>Adjustments.



Photo Filter

02 Next we are going to add a sepia photo filter at 35% Density. This is to continue to blend the lighting and colours together.



Color Balance

03 A great way to adjust colour is using the Color Balance adjustment layer. Change these settings for Midtones, Highlights and Shadows to achieve the look you're going for.



Gradient Map

04 Just as we did previously, add another Gradient Map. However, this time you can use the default purple to orange setting. Set this on Hue, with a 10% Opacity.

Apply mystical smoke effects

Create an ethereal beauty by learning to combine brushes and masks in one seamless effect

This abstract image is surprisingly easy to make, thanks to the clever combination of custom brushes and layer masks. The brushes you need are free online, and our steps will lead you through how to load them into Photoshop and begin creating. It's incredibly easy to add new brushes, and it opens up so many possibilities in your creative projects. Feel free to search around for more shapes and themes for your final piece.

Once the basic shape is in place, masks and blend modes will come into play to add

back tone and some standout features. Overall, the techniques we're going to be using are very basic. However, the placement of the brushes and the tweaking and shaping of our portrait will require patience and a sharp eye. Trial and error is often the best way to move forward; paint a smoke brush on a new layer, move it around, transform it, use the Brush panel to flip or rotate it, decide if it works and simply delete it if it doesn't! Don't be afraid to get things wrong; it's often the best way of finding out what looks right.



Create your base

01 Create a portrait canvas with File> New and add 'Match.jpg'. Use Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to resize and position the match towards the bottom right-hand corner. Add a layer mask and remove the white above the match using a black paint brush.

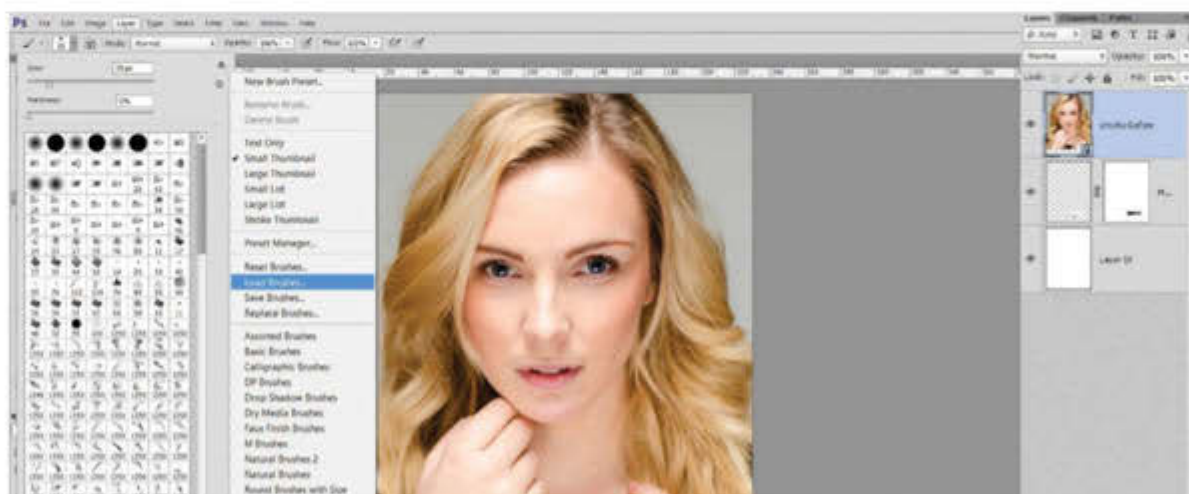


Position the face

02 File>Place 'smoke-before.jpg' onto your canvas. Resize and position it so it's large in the centre. You can temporarily lower the Opacity to use the position of the match as a guide. Hit Enter to confirm the placement.

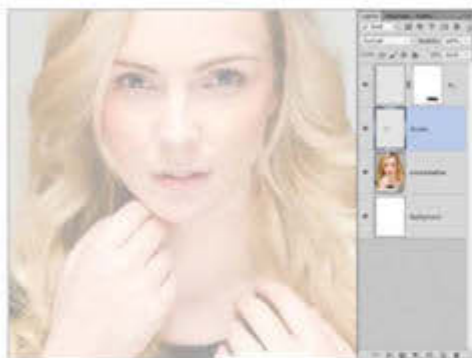
Load custom brushes

03 Download 'Real Smoke Photoshop Brushes' from www.brusheezy.com. Save the file, unzip it and go back to Photoshop. Select the Brush tool (B) and in the Brush Preset menu, click the Settings icon and go to Load Brushes. Navigate to your new ABR file and hit Load.



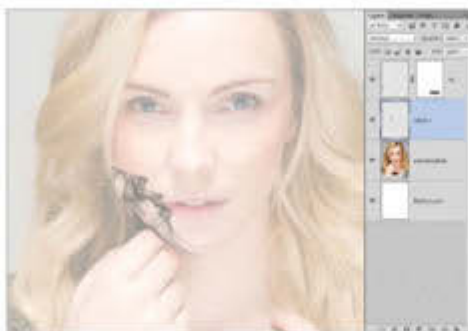


Source files
available



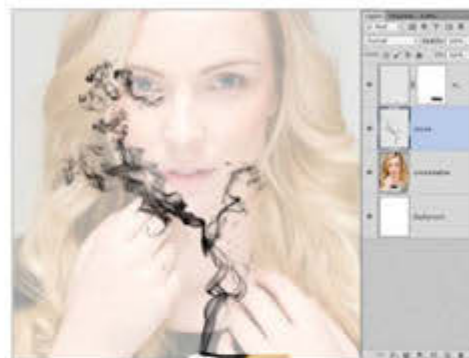
Prepare your layers

04 Adjust your layer order so that the match layer is on top and the photo underneath, then create a new layer with Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N in between the two. Lower the Opacity of the photo layer to around 40%. This is going to be our guide.



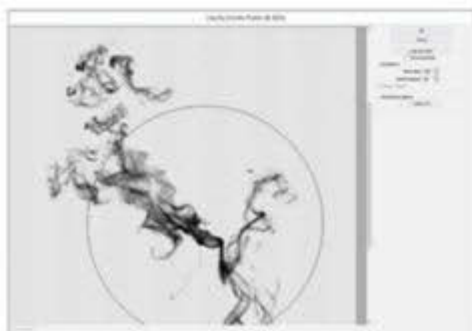
Use the Brush panel

05 Open your Brush Preset menu and pick a brush that matches the curve of the right-hand side of the model's jaw – you may need to use the Brush panel to rotate and flip. Open this using the icon next to the Preset thumbnail. Use black to paint in the main smoke.



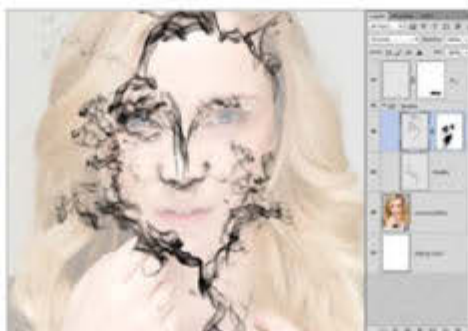
Outline the jaw

06 Continue to select brushes, and adjust with the Brush panel to roughly outline her jaw, and create a trail down to the match. Work carefully and slowly. To help prevent mistakes, you can use each brush on a separate layer.



Liquify the smoke

07 To get the smoke to the correct shape, you can use the Liquefy tool in Filter>Liquify. Select the Forward Warp tool (W) and use a large brush to avoid sharp shapes that wouldn't exist in smoke. Gently push the smoke so that it is slightly straighter at the jawline.



Add smokey features

08 Go through the brushes, finding shapes that match the contours of the photo. Use new layers to separate sections. Keep the outline fairly rough, defining only main features, such as the eyes and nose. Use layer masks to help define areas and don't forget Liquefy!



Fill in the outlines

09 Select a neutral grey colour and create new layers below your smoke outlines. Use the fuller brushes to create a paler body of smoke behind the black – don't worry about obscuring features; they'll be redefined in the next few steps. Group all of your smoke layers.



Add some colour

10 Duplicate your photo layer with Cmd/Ctrl+J and hide the original. Drag the new copy above the smoke and set the blend mode to Overlay. Erase the mouth on the layer, as the colour is too bright, and use a layer mask to blend the sharp bottom-edge of the layer.



Create vibrant colour

11 Duplicate this layer and then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set the slider options to around 95px to blur the details. Add a vibrant colour all over the image. Adjust the layer mask as necessary.



Duplicate the eyes

12 Duplicate your original photo layer and move it above the smoke layers. Use the Lasso tool (L) to roughly draw around the right eye. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate. Go back and roughly draw around the left eye. Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy. Delete the photo layer copy.



Blend in eye layers

13 Add layer masks to both eye layers and use a soft, low-Opacity brush (around 10-30%) to blend the eyes with the smoke. Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer above the eyes and set Saturation to -100 to remove unwanted colours.



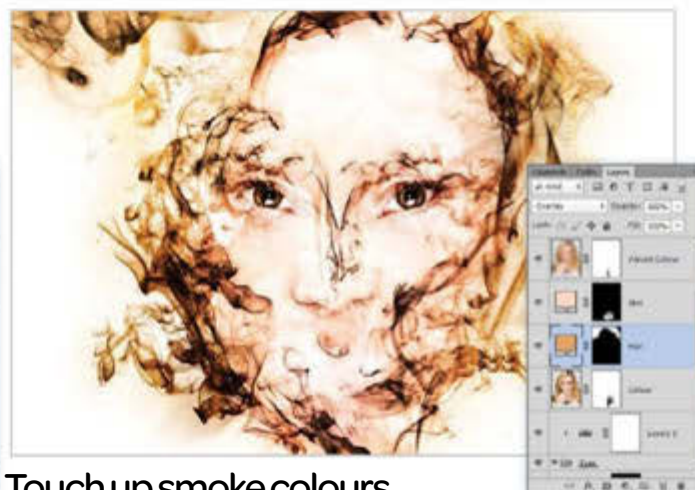
Make the eyes pop

14 Add two Curves adjustment layers above the eyes, drag one of the curves all the way down to darken, fill the mask in black, and paint white in a ring around each iris. With the other, drag the curve up to lighten and apply to the inside of the iris.



Add eye colour

15 Create a brown Solid Color adjustment layer above all your layers. Set the blend mode to Color and use the layer mask to only apply it to the eyes. Add a lighter brown Solid Color adjustment layer and apply to the eyes as well, for a more realistic tonal range.



Touch up smoke colours

16 As our photo layer isn't quite as big as the smoke needs to be, add more Solid Color adjustment layers – one for her hair and one for her skin colour. Set blend modes to Color and use the masks to blend in areas of smoke that are still black.

What can go wrong? Avoid brush overkill

Keep the smoke simple

When using interesting brushes, it can be tempting to try and use them all in the one edit. However, this can result in a messy image. To avoid this, try testing out each brush before introducing it properly into your image, or use separate layers to allow you to remove any that don't work later on. Try to stick to defining the most prominent features with the darker, thinner strands of smoke, such as the jawline, hairline and nose. Then, move onto the fuller brushes with a lighter shade to subtly add texture to less important areas, such as the main bulk of the skin. Try not to spread the strands out too much; imagine how real smoke might rise and gradually disperse.



Right



Wrong

Fixes

124 20 ultimate photo fixes

Master the best photo edits

134 Retouch a portrait with ease

Use professional retouching techniques

138 Correct camera distortion in Elements

Use a distort filter to change perspectives

142 Create soft focus

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Utilise the Crop Tool on your photos

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“You will discover how to remove unwanted colour casts from your captures”



Create facial hair
and take it away

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SPOT HEALING

Master basic fixes like Spot Healing, Cloning and Content-Aware Fill.

BOOST COLOUR

Learn how to get bright and more precise with individual colours in a picture.

ENHANCE DETAILS

Bring out the very best in your portraits by smoothing skin, editing exposure, boosting contrast and more.



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN



CLONING/ CONTENT AWARE

Magically add or subtract subjects from an image!



RETOUCH QUICKLY

Blitz through the basics of retouching with a few clicks.



20 ULTIMATE PHOTO FIXES

Master the nuts and bolts of photo fixes in this essential guide, and make your shots shine

It was once a novelty to possess a pinhole or Polaroid; more common perhaps to own a film or disposable camera. Then came the digital era, in which photography became more convenient and a popular pastime for many. Now, with the boom of the smartphone and social media, most of us have a camera in our pocket.

The satisfaction of a beautiful picture has stayed the same though; it might be a selfie of your family for your phone's lock screen, or a sunrise patiently

captured with the best kit known to photographers. But no photo is beyond a little improvement.

Every Photoshop user should have the shortcuts of photo enhancing in their arsenal; procedures that provide simple solutions but which you can also be creative with and have some fun.

In a world where everyone is taking and sharing photos, you don't need to be a top photographer for your snaps to stand out. You just need some tricks up your sleeve, like the ones provided here.

PATCHING

Fix annoying, flyaway hair with very little effort, and minimise your time spent on erasing unwanted details.



CREATIVE BASICS

The simple Crop and Sharpen tools can be the most effective.



ADJUST EXPOSURE

Get the most out of your lighting, without investing in top equipment.



BOOST COLOURS

Give photos a pop and learn this important Photoshop fix.

BOOST SKIES

The Smart Brush tool in Photoshop Elements gives you quick blue skies with very little effort.

EXPERT TIP

Make colours stand out

If you want to focus on one particular colour, try sliding the Hue up to 8 points either side of the original colour in the Adjustments. This can turn red colours slightly pinker and blue colours slightly more cyan, which really makes a selected colour stand out.

CURVES

Using Curves, or Adjust Color Curves, you can make very powerful edits to colours, adding impact to a scene.

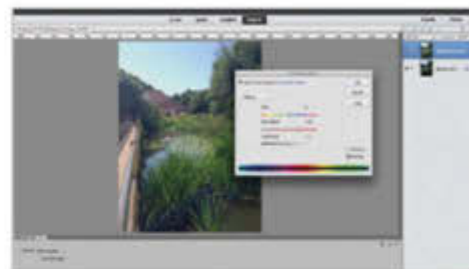
Start image

GENERAL FIXES FOR YOUR PHOTOS

Improve your images using some of the most common Photoshop tools

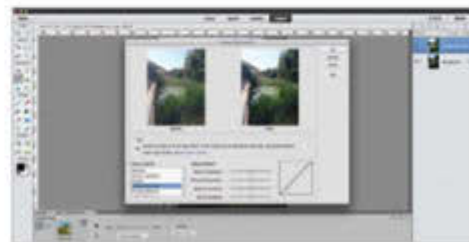
Many of your digital photos won't need a heavy editing hand to turn them from an average image to a good one. Rather, you will find that there are certain tools and processes that you will use time and time again for big improvements. In this section, we will be looking at how you can quickly and easily correct colour, exposure, composition and more using the most basic of tools. These tips should be your first port of call when editing an image, as it prepares them well for using in more creative projects.

Boost your colours



Hue/Saturation

01 A good first tool is Hue/Saturation, applied either as an adjustment layer or from the Image>Adjustments menu (Photoshop) or Enhance>Adjust Color (Elements). Sliding the Saturation control to the right boosts colours, while Lightness increases the luminosity.



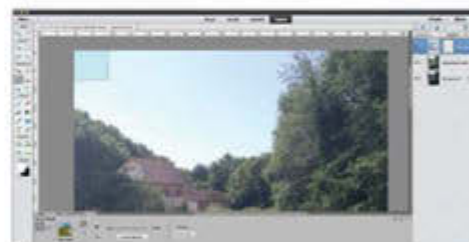
Curve control

02 Curves are perfect for controlling colours and tones. In Photoshop, visit Image>Adjustments and tweak the curve to suit. Elements doesn't have Curves, but there is a useful option called Adjust Color Curves, found under the Enhance>Adjust Color menu.



Color Curves

03 In the Adjust Color Curves dialog box, you can pick from a selection of presets and see how it affects the colours in your image. The curve diagram changes to reflect your choices, so it helps you to quickly understand what curves can do.



Smart Brush

04 Sticking with Elements, a great way to boost colours in your images is to use the options in the Smart Brush tool. There are options such as Blue Skies and Intensify Foliage to target specific colours. You simply paint over the area you want to adjust.

Adjust your exposure



Use the Exposure control

01 Photoshop Elements has a built-in quick fix for exposure issues. In Quick mode, choose Exposure from the right-hand panel and go through the thumbnails to choose the one that gives the best improvement. The slider lets you fine-tune the effect.



Use your Levels

02 Levels is the best tool to adjust exposure. In Photoshop Elements, access them from Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels; in Photoshop it's in Image>Adjustments>Levels. This brings up a histogram showing the distribution of tones across your image.



Levels adjustment

03 The triangles underneath the histogram control shadows, highlights and midtones. By moving them left and right, you can change the exposure of an image. Hitting Auto is a good start, then you can experiment to get the right exposure for your image.



Shadows/Highlights

04 Another good control is the Shadows/Highlights command, found in the same menu options as Levels. This lets you precisely control the exposure of the shadow and highlight points across your whole image. A delicate touch is key, as you want to retain realism.

Tips | Tricks | Fixes

CROP IMAGES FOR BETTER COMPOSITION



Sometimes the simplest of tools can make a really big difference to your photos. For example, the Crop tool is a great way of improving your composition with little effort. In both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements you can use the Crop tool and constrain it to a certain ratio or resolution. You can also turn a grid on to help you figure out the best way to crop.



CREATE THE LOMO EFFECT



Just by controlling the RGB curves separately, you are able to create an effective Lomo effect. Pull the top half of the red curve upwards, and the bottom half of the green curve downwards; then pull the top half of the blue curve downwards and the bottom half upwards, to create a backwards 'S' shape. You should have something a little like the grid to the left, and this will give your photo a subtle yet retro filter.

GO BLACK AND WHITE

One way to improve the colour in your photos can actually be to remove it. Some images look better in black and white, as it can add drama and impact to a scene. There are lots of different ways to turn a photo monochrome, but we suggest trying a Black & White adjustment layer in Photoshop. If you're in Elements, then go to Enhance>Convert to Black and White, which has some really nice presets that you can play around with.



CLONING & CONTENT-AWARE

Now you see it, now you don't!
Remove problem areas with ease

Almost every photo contains something that is unintentional. Maybe it's an aeroplane interrupting your sunset shot; perhaps an ugly bus barreling across your serene country landscape. Whatever it is, if you don't want it there, Photoshop can remove it. The Clone Stamp tool was created for this very purpose, and Photoshop's Content-Aware features make short work of issues that used to require a lengthy session of careful hand adjustment. The main concept behind the technology is to create sample areas from the surrounding pixels, then use those samples to fill in the targeted area. It can work wonders for distracting background elements, or flyaway hairs and facial blemishes.



CONTENT-AWARE FILL

Removing distracting elements over a gradient background can be a challenge by hand; it's really difficult to get the gradient to match up. The Content-Aware feature makes this much easier. The simplest application is found in the Edit>Fill command. Create a selection around a distracting element and go to Edit>Fill and choose Content-Aware from the Use options.

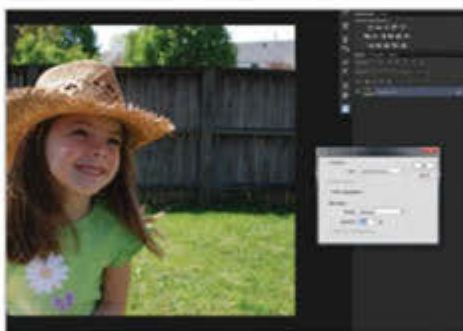


Start image



Identify elements for removal

01 Here's an adorable image, but there are some areas that can benefit from some attention. Things like the light splash on her cheek, the stump in the background, sheds over the fence, and flyaway hairs can all be removed to create a better image.



Remove the stump

02 The most egregious visual distraction is that ugly old stump. Create a selection around it and go to Edit>Fill. Choose Content-Aware and hit OK. If the results have a strange halo, use the Clone Stamp to treat those areas.



Remove flyaway hair

03 The tiny strands of flyaway hair can be easily cloned out by sampling the background area just above or below the hair, then carefully tracing along the strand. Make sure the boards line up or the edit will be obvious.



EXPERT TIP

Clone Source panel

When attempting to align a sample point for the Clone Stamp tool, you might be reluctant to change the sample point and lose the alignment. To solve this, go to Window>Clone Source. The icons along the top of the panel allow you to save up to five sample settings.

CLEAR AREAS

Content-Aware Fill makes light work of removing small items from your images, such as the unsightly stump in our original.

Tips | Tricks | Fixes



CLONE STAMP EDIT

The Clone Stamp tool is a classic solution to the problem of removing distracting elements. The technique involves sampling pixels from one portion of the image to paint over another area. To sample, hold down Alt/Opt and click on the area you want to sample. Then paint over the element to remove, and the tool copies, or clones, pixels from the sample point to paint with.



WORK TOGETHER

By working the tools in conjunction with each other, even large portions of an image can be successfully removed and replaced with synthetic background area. The trick is to continue working the area after the first tool application. If the Content-Aware results are not desirable, create a new selection and try again. Then use the Clone Stamp tool for a final tidy.



Remove the sun spot

04 For the spots on the girl's cheek, try first to remove them by making small selections and using Content-Aware Fill. But be prepared to use the Clone Stamp to perform additional edits.



Tidy the background

05 Use the Clone Stamp tool to brush out the shed and roof in the background over the fence. Don't just select a single sample point, or the image will show repetition. Change the sample point frequently to maintain variety.



Apply final touches

06 After the unwanted elements are removed, add the final edits to finish the photo. Consider treatments, such as increased Clarity in the Camera Raw Filter, and adding an Iris Blur. These effects will help hide the cloning edits.

ALTERNATIVE CLONING TOOLS

The Spot Healing brush and Patch tool enable simple retouching

While the Clone Stamp and Content-Aware Fill tend to get most of the retouching spotlight, they are far from the only players on the Photoshop stage. There's an entire supporting cast to explore. Two great places to start are the Spot Healing brush and the Patch tool. Both have Content-Aware technology integrated into their functionality, and are very helpful for seamlessly removing elements the other tools struggle with. They work on very similar principles, but provide a means of guiding the automated process to make sure the tool isn't pulling pixel information from an unwanted source.

CONTROLLED HAIR

Remove any unwanted elements seen in the background or the foreground areas of portraits. This keeps the visual focus locked onto the subject.

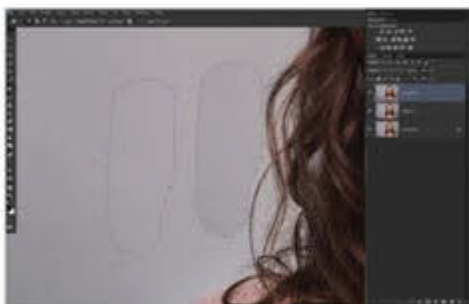


Quick retouching



Remove blemishes

01 Using the Spot Healing brush, click on the facial skin blemishes and imperfections to quickly and easily remove them. This tool can also be used to create a degree of skin smoothness by painting away rough areas.



Remove flyaway hair

02 Individual strands of unruly hair can be easily traced over and then removed with the Spot Healing brush. If the background area of the image is a solid colour or a simple gradient, the Patch tool can quickly remove entire areas of stray hair.

THE PATCH TOOL

The Patch tool is actually a superior solution to the Content-Aware Fill feature. But it doesn't get the same attention because it's not fully automated. Instead it blends the Content-Aware technology with artistic direction to produce better results. Select an area you wish to remove, then set the tool to Content-Aware and drag the selection to a sample area and let Photoshop handle the rest!



Remove other distractions

03 Now remove any other distracting elements in the shot. Here we removed the hand peeking into the frame by using a combination of the Content-Aware Fill and the Healing Brush. A touch or two of the Clone Stamp tool can be helpful for areas the automated process can't figure out.



Add warmth and boost

04 Finish up by adding a Photo Filter adjustment layer to add warmth to the image and a Curves adjustment layer. Use a subtle S-shape for the curves to give the contrast a bit of a boost.



Start image

FOREGROUND INTRUSIONS BEGONE!

It's not just background distractions that are subject to removal. Foreground intrusions can be eliminated just as easily. In this image we cleaned up the branches sticking out in front of the girl's blouse and leg. We also removed the vine in the background, and the utility box attached to the tree – all with a few simple sweeps of the Clone Stamp tool and the Content-Aware Fill.



EXPERT TIP

Change the blend mode
Many of the brush-based tools include an option for changing the blending mode. Darken or Lighten help target stubborn pixels that resist change in the normal settings. Just remember to return the setting to Normal when you're finished.

SUBTLE DELETIONS

Foreground elements such as twigs and foliage don't necessarily ruin a picture, but their removal certainly improves matters.

Tips | Tricks | Fixes



CLONE STAMP OUT

The Clone-Stamp Tool is a classic solution to the problem of removing distracting elements. The technique involves sampling pixels from one portion of the image to paint over another area. To sample, hold down alt/opt and click on the sample area. Then paint over the element to remove and the tool copies, or clones, pixels from the sample point to paint with.

Start image



SPOT HEALING BRUSH

The Spot Healing brush is ideal for removing small areas, such as skin blemishes or strands of flyaway hair. The difference in this tool is that you don't need to define a sample area first. The tool calculates it from the surrounding pixels. The key is to keep the brush size just slightly larger than the target spot or hair, so the result blends in seamlessly.



THE BEST FILTER FIXES

Find out how to fix up your photos with Photoshop's filters

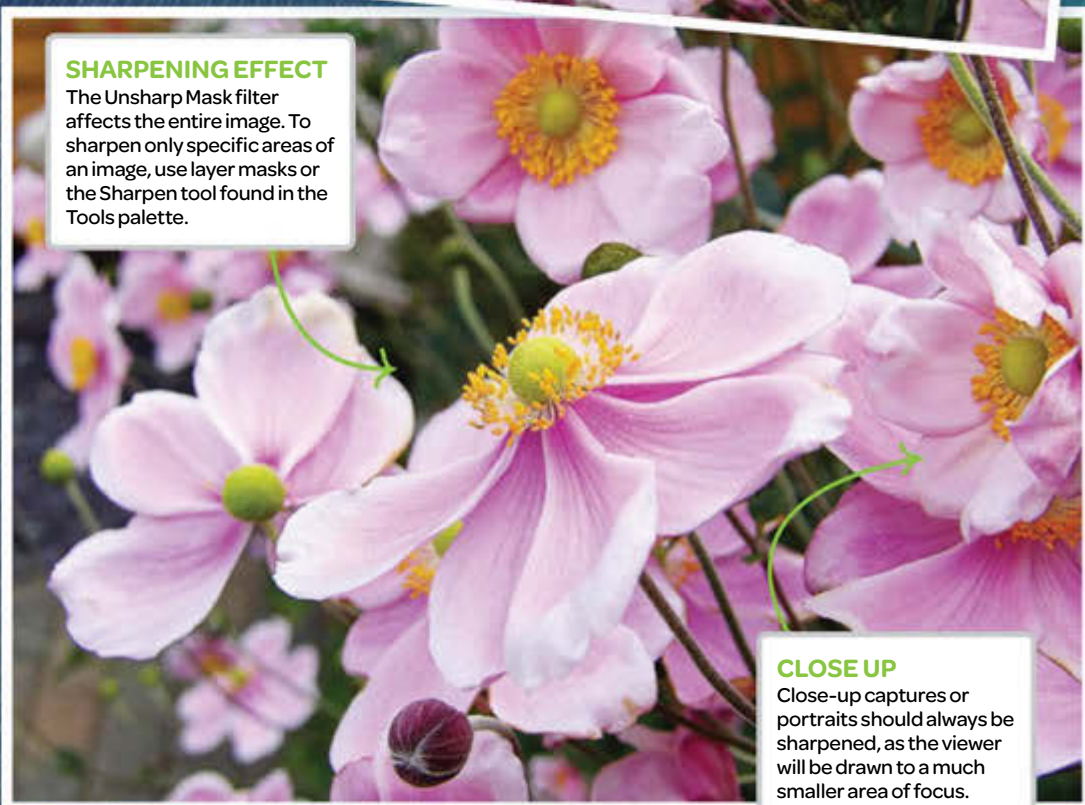
The Filter menu offers a fantastic array of creative effects, including options that turn your images into works of art. But transforming photos into frescos is not all the Filter menu has to offer. In fact, there's a great selection of tools that can not only help enhance your images but also fix problem areas.

In this section we take you through some of the key enhancing features within the Filter menu. You'll learn all about correcting lens distortions, reducing noise in low-light captures, smoothing skin and sharpening up soft shots. Follow the four-step tutorial and find out how to use the Unsharp Mask filter effectively for sharper shots in only a matter of minutes and a few clicks.



SHARPENING EFFECT

The Unsharp Mask filter affects the entire image. To sharpen only specific areas of an image, use layer masks or the Sharpen tool found in the Tools palette.



CLOSE UP

Close-up captures or portraits should always be sharpened, as the viewer will be drawn to a much smaller area of focus.



CORRECT DISTORTIONS

Within the Filter gallery you'll find plenty of useful tools, including Lens Correction. Use the filter to fix optical distortions created by some camera lenses. It's a fantastic tool that will not only help you to remove barrel and pincushion distortion, so that the lines appear straighter in your shots, but also reduce obvious chromatic aberration, vignettes and even correct the image perspective caused by vertical or horizontal camera tilt.



Duplicate the layer

01 Open the image to sharpen in Photoshop. Right-click on the Background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Re-name to Sharpen Layer and click OK. Now select your new layer to activate it. Go to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask.



Adjust the amount

02 Select the Preview icon and zoom in to an area you want to appear sharper. Slowly increase the Amount slider, which determines how strong the sharpening will be. Start at 100%. You can change this later.

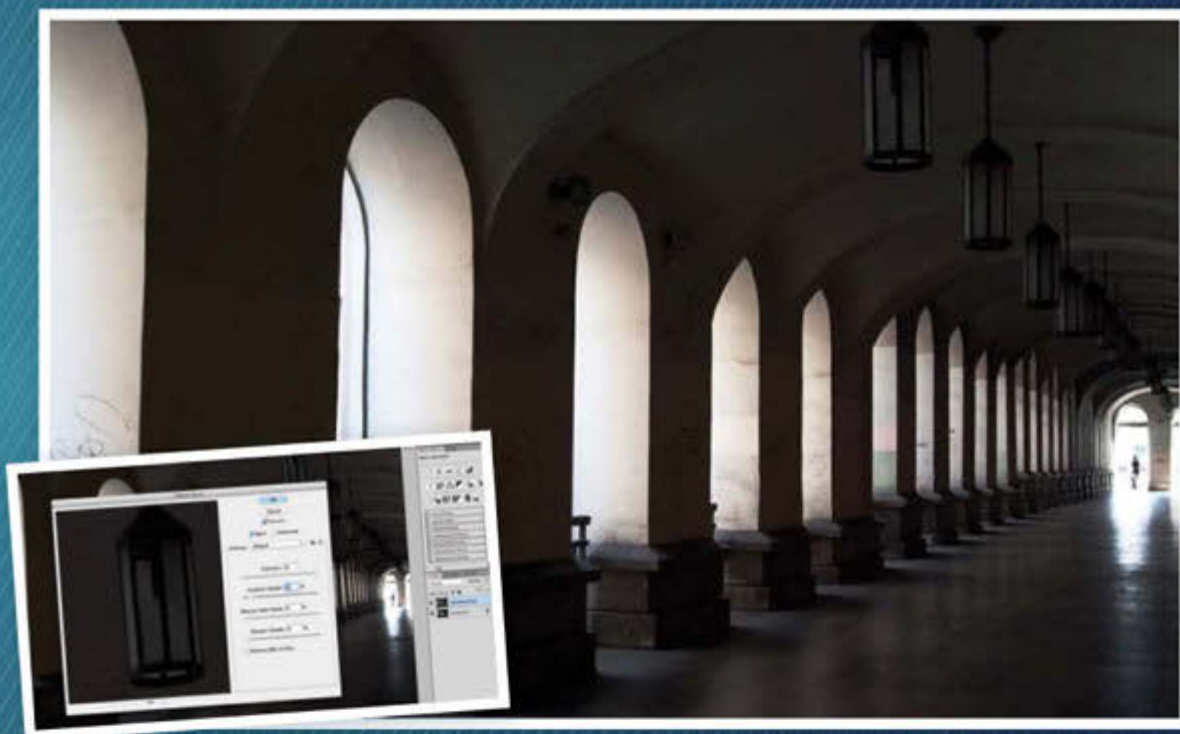
CREATE SMOOTH SKIN

Adding a little blur to shots is a great way to smooth skin for flattering portraits or even enhance a background blur effect you've maybe not managed to capture in-camera. Explore the blur options within the Filter menu for different effects. Surface Blur is great for softening skin; in the dialog box simply bring the Radius slider up to around 60 pixels and pull the Threshold up to 7.



REDUCE NOISE

This is one problem that pretty much everyone has experience of. If you've taken an image in low light without the use of flash, your camera will often select a higher ISO setting, which makes the camera more sensitive to light so that you get a brighter exposure. However, high ISOs introduce noise into your images. In order to reduce the appearance of noise, go to Filter>Noise>Reduce Noise. Within the dialog box, adjust the Strength and Preserve details sliders to reduce luminance noise, and use the Reduce Color Noise slider for taking control of any colour noise in your image.



Sharpen the edges

03 Select the Radius slider, which controls the sharpening lines. These need to be wide enough to make a difference, without being noticeable. Around 1.7 pixels works for large prints. Less is good for smaller prints or online use.



Fine-tune the results

04 The Threshold slider should be kept low, between 1-10. Set it to around 2, which will ensure the image appears sharp but also prevents any noise becoming noticeable. Once you're happy with the results click OK and then save your image.



EXPERT TIP

Sharpen for output

How much sharpening you apply depends on the image's output. High-quality canvas prints can withstand more sharpening, so set the Radius between 1.0-2.5 pixels.

For smaller prints, set the Radius between 0.4-1.0 pixels and for websites between 0.2-0.3 pixels.



Retouch a portrait with ease

Whether you want to make subtle changes or drastic alterations, learn how to make your edits deliberate, but not overpowering

When opening up a portrait, it will often look great at first glance but then we stare at it, looking for problem areas that need to be fixed. The more we look, the more issues we are going to find. After a few hours of retouching, it's useful to carry out a before-and-after comparison. Even on the most beautiful of subjects, you will find there were dozens of large and small areas that needed your attention.

When it comes to beauty retouching, many of the techniques that are used for one image can easily be used again for others you are working on.

Cloning and Healing, Dodge and Burn, Unsharp Mask and Liquify are some of the most commonly used tools. Eventually, you will come across an image that requires a higher skillset and more creativity to resolve all the issues.

Damaged skin, moire patterns, soft focus and flyaway hairs are just some of the many obstacles you will face when embarking on portrait retouching. Poor retouching can easily make things worse than the original problem was to begin with. If you do a good job retouching, though, no one will notice you did anything at all.



Start with Camera Raw

01 When opening a Raw file in Photoshop, it will open Adobe Camera Raw. It has very simple controls for complex functions. Start with the balancing of tone and adjusting the colour by making global moves in the first tool panel.



Open as Object

02 Rather than pushing the Open Image button, hold down Shift to reveal the Open as Object button instead. This retains the Camera Raw functionality and settings. Once in Photoshop, you will notice the layer is now a Smart Object.

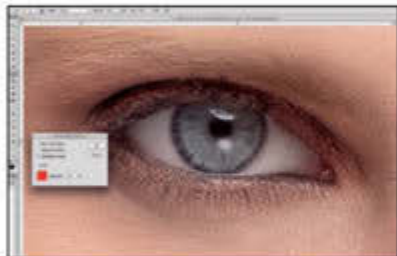
Make global changes first

03 Subtle changes can use simple masks, while large changes need more attention. Work globally at first; don't get too involved with the details. Create quick and loose masks for the eyes, skin and blouse as you work through steps 4-6.



Expert edit

Quick Mask selections



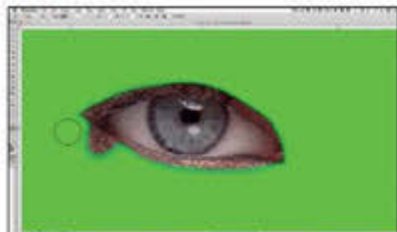
Quick Mask preferences

01 Double-click on the Quick Mask button (below the colours) and a dialog box will open. Use 100% Opacity and Selected Areas. Click OK, then click the Quick Mask icon one more time.



Use Quick Mask

02 Click on the Quick Mask button (Q key) again to begin editing. Use the Paint Brush tool with black at 100% Opacity. Wherever you want the selection, simply paint it in.



Adjust the mask

03 Remember that when you make a mistake, you can always swap your brush to white so that you can remove any incorrect selections from your mask.



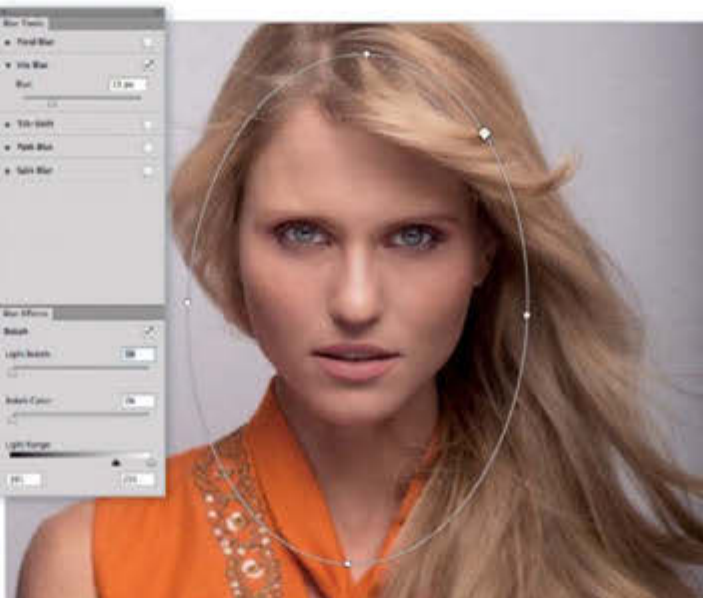
Mask to selection

04 Once again, click on the Quick Mask button, and you will be back into regular Photoshop. Only this time you will have a selection, based on the areas that you painted.



Adjust blouse saturation

04 The blouse is too bright; it is considered a prop, and should not be dominant. Use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with Colorize to slightly change the colour. Also use a Curves adjustment layer to modify the contrast and bring back lost detail in the fabric.



Make tonal changes

05 A soft and loose mask can be used to encircle the entire eye area. Using a Curves adjustment layer, brighten the eye sockets, but then darken the iris to keep the area from looking like it's been worked too much. Again, subtlety is key. Keep it bright, but not too bright.

Create depth of field

06 Go to Filter>Blur> Iris Blur to leave the face sharp, but soften the hair and back of the head to simulate depth of field. You should also mask out the areas that are even with the face, and let those stay sharp. This will help enhance the illusion that this was an in-camera effect.



Graft skin

07 The skin under the eyes and across the nose is pretty bad, so skin grafting from another shot is necessary. Use the supplied 'Skin_Graft.tif' file to replace this section, and blend the two together. Set the layer Opacity to 75% and scale and rotate with Edit>Free Transform.



Match colour and tone

08 Return the layer Opacity to 100% and add a layer mask filled with white. Match the colour with Selective Color and tone with a Levels or Curves adjustment layer while you simultaneously paint on the mask with a soft black brush. Gradually blend the two images together.



Sharpen skin details

09 Rather than blurring the skin to smooth it out, use Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask on the skin with 100, 2, 2 to bring out the softer details barely seen. This will make bad skin look worse, but you can fix it later during the cloning step.



Use dual window panes

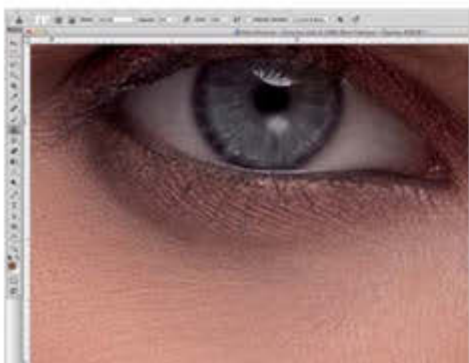
10 When cloning skin, use a split view of the same image with Window>Arrange>New Window. One is a close-up for the details, and one is far away for an overall view. Doing this will make it much easier to see patches of dark and light areas that need fixing.

Expert tip



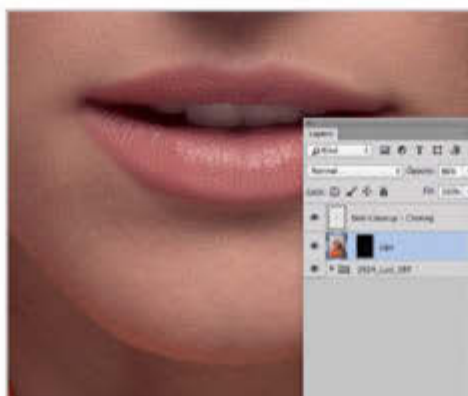
Leave some mistakes

Don't make the portrait 100 per cent perfect. Leave some imperfections behind. If every hair is in place, and there are no blemishes at all, it will look overworked and fake. By leaving behind minor areas of imperfection, they will allow the perfected areas to be more believable and acceptable to the viewer's eye. It is the retoucher's job to enhance, but not to distract with a heavy-handed approach. Subtlety is your key to success.



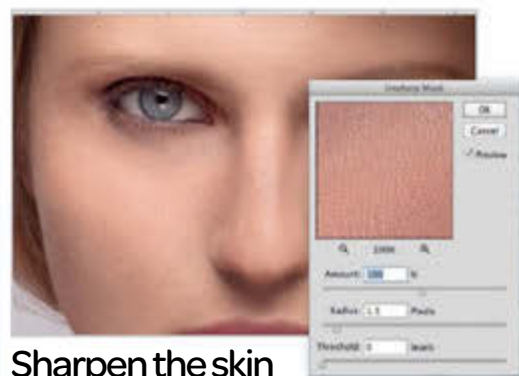
Heal and clone

11 Start with the Healing Brush. Then go back with the Clone Stamp set to 10% Opacity. Clone a light area over a dark area, and a dark area over a light area. Pixel for pixel, pore for pore. This slow and tedious work is necessary for quality results.



Soften the lips

12 The lips have too many creases, and are uneven in the top centre. Fill in the gaps with cloning techniques, the same as the rest of the skin. The lips should have a soft shimmer and not cause distraction.



Sharpen the skin

13 You may find that all the cloning makes the skin look too soft. Select all the layers and either merge them all together, or right-click and Convert to Smart Object. Create a selection of the skin and Apply Filter>Unsharp Mask 100, 1.5, 0 to pull out extra fine details in skin.



Adjust highlights and shadows

14 Light sculpting, also known as dodge and burn, can be used to manipulate the highlights and shadows to enhance the contours and focal points. Start by creating a darkening Curve, and also a lightening Curve. Fill both masks with black so the Curves effects are hidden.



Dodge and Burn

15 You can then paint on each of the masks with a white brush set to 10% Opacity. Gradually, you will be adding or removing the different tones around the face. By darkening the shadows and lightening the brights, the image will become more visually interest.

Correct camera distortion in Elements

Use a simple distort filter to throw a new perspective on your photos

The best photo fixes are the ones that don't look edited. It is easier said than done, but the perfect correction can be both powerful and subtle. If you can make an edited picture look as if it's always been like that, then you are halfway to becoming a master of Photoshop.

It may seem like a magic trick now, but there are ways to correct any picture and photo fixes for any occasion. While these photo fixes are great tools to have at the ready, actually, the obvious filters are also a fantastic place to start. The Correct Camera Distortion filter for example, is a simple way to delicately play with the perspective and scale of a photo and even correct the flaws that photographers sometimes encounter.

However, that doesn't mean that camera correction has to be an arduous and boring quick fix. There's still fun that can be had from transforming a photo with only a few simple clicks. Let's look at three of the main techniques that the Correct Camera Distortion filter handles and see how they can be applied into your photos.

"There's still fun that can be had from transforming a photo"



A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The Correct Camera Distortion filter adjusts the perspective and scale of your photo, as well as correcting any faults.



Tweak the perspective

Shift the focus from one side of an image to another

Perspective is something more than often associated with the Transform and Crop tools, but you can easily alter the perspective of a picture by using Camera Correction. It is the perfect way to keep the straight lines in your picture impeccably parallel and give the impression that you used a tripod to take the snap.

"It is associated with Transform and Crop"



Show grid

01 Here we're going to use the grid, as cities rely much more on straight lines. You may not want a perfectly straight shot, but a grid will help align a picture more accurately. Click the option at the bottom.



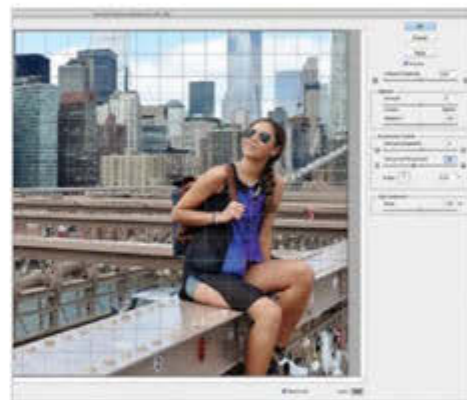
Get a vertical perspective

02 Tweak the Vertical Perspective. You might want it to appear as if the viewer is looking up at the buildings, or you could make them more level with the viewer. Change this setting very slightly.



Adjust the angle

03 Turn the Angle of the photo so that the buildings and the grid are parallel. You might want to tweak both the Vertical Perspective and the Angle simultaneously to get a result you think looks best.



The horizontal perspective

04 You can now tweak the Horizontal Perspective to give the subject a much sharper focus. The best part about this is that it will not interfere with the Vertical Perspective at all.

Add a vignette

Give a retro touch to the edges of any photograph

You probably thought that adding a vignette would be a case of manually brushing the edges of a photo, and it can be if you want to create a deep, dark edge. However, to apply an understated fade to the corners of a photograph it couldn't be easier, as it relies on just a couple of sliders to give a retro feel to any shot.

"To apply an understated fade to the corners of a photo it couldn't be easier, as it relies on a couple of sliders"

A RETRO LOOK

The vignette around the central focus has intensified the light and shade.

Start image



Apply a vignette

Use sliders to adjust the amount of vignette around your image



Centralise the photo

01 A vignette is added to the edges of a photo, so make sure your subject is within the perimeters to occupy the central spotlight. Crop as necessary or find a photo that the vignette will really suit.



Alter the amount

02 Move the sliders to adjust the amount of vignette – decide if you want it to be light or dark. Dark vignettes are generally more popular and give a lo-fi look to any photo!



Alter the Midpoint

03 Use the Midpoint sliders to decide how far you want the vignette to infringe the central focus of your picture. This may depend on how much of the picture your subject takes up or how retro you want it.

Manually improve your vignette

Enhance the camera-correction edit



Black layer

01 If you want a black vignette, create a new layer and fill it in black. You could create a vignette of any colour, but we're going to go with a classic dark one to show you how to enhance the one we created.



Mask and Erase

02 Create a mask over the black layer. Select a big, soft, black brush and brush over the mask, revealing the subject in the centre of the photo. Brush out to the edges as far as you want the vignette to go.



Set Blend mode

03 Set the blend mode to Soft Light to Experiment with different blend modes and opacity at this point. For example, fading the photo out to monochrome could look really effective.

Correct the distortion

Bend your photos and create a much straighter finish

Photographs rarely turn out exactly as you want them, which is why we have photo fixes. Photo fixes should be as straightforward as possible, and Photoshop's Correct Distortion slider is a basic modification that can be added to any picture. It can be used to give depth or realign any photo, and relies only on the one slider.

"And it relies on only one slider"

BEND THE PHOTO
Give depth or realign a photo with the Correct Distortion slider.



Choose a photo

01 Pick a photo that you want to correct the distortion of. Photos of trees are good to begin with, as it's not vital to stick to rigid, straight lines, but you can still realign and flatten them out by eye.



Remove the distortion

02 Head to Filter>Correct Camera Distortion. The top option you'll see will be Distortion. This pulls the photo either in or out, rather like a fisheye effect. Experiment until the trees all look straighter and tilt the angle slightly to level the picture.



Edge Extension

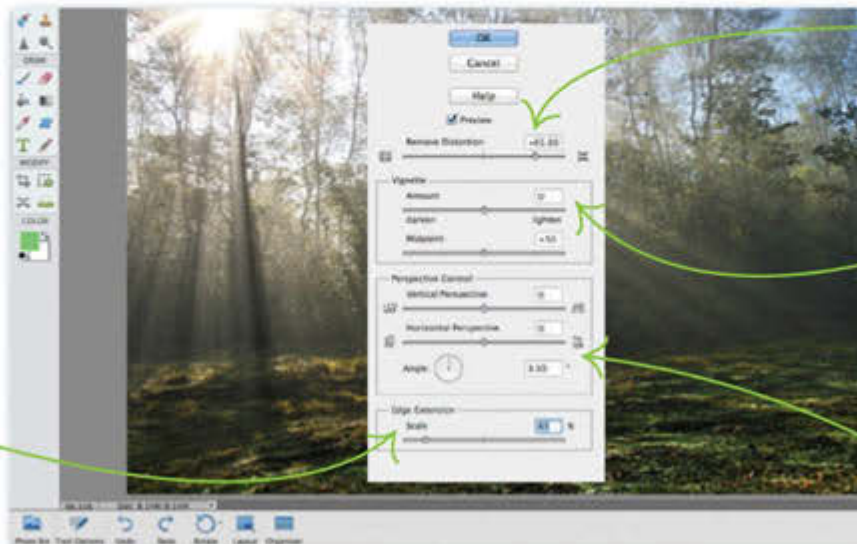
03 The Edge Extension option allows you to either zoom in or out on your picture, which makes it a perfect final step for you to assess how your photo looks from afar. Zoom out to see how the shot looks, before moving the counter back to normal.

Remove any flaws

Improve the look of your photo with these tools

EDGE EXTENSION

Best used as a Zoom tool, the Edge Extension can also be used ultimately as a final crop for your edited pictures.



REMOVE DISTORTION

Stop photos from beavelling outwards or pulling inwards with an almost fisheye control to straighten up shots.

ADD A VIGNETTE

Add dark – or light – faded edges to your photos for a classic or homemade twist on any picture.

PERSPECTIVE CONTROL

Throw more focus to the one side of your photo and then level up the straight lines in your picture.

ORIGINAL LAYER

Keeping your original layer means that you can fade out as much or as little of the blur as you like.

BLURRED LAYER

Turn up the blur further for a more exposed, softer focus, and experiment with how much to reveal with the opacity slider.



Source files available



Create soft focus

Make your photos glow and add a gentle soft focus in Elements

Some subjects have a natural glow when you photograph them, but if you know how to use simple blurring techniques, any picture can be enhanced by a beautiful soft focus.

Learning basic photo edits in Elements can open the door to so many possibilities with your artwork. Not only can you add a light radiance to your compositions, you can prep a photo ready to place text over – see the Average Blur effect – or even just enhance the natural energy of a picture. You might even find that there are few

photos, compositions or even digital paintings that can't be improved with a soft focus.

And the great thing about the soft-focus effect is that it's quick to master and easily customisable; you can add a huge glow or just subtly blur around the edges of your subject's hair.

Let's check out how to master this effect in just four steps; remember to experiment as much as you like to create a soft focus more suited to your specific photo.

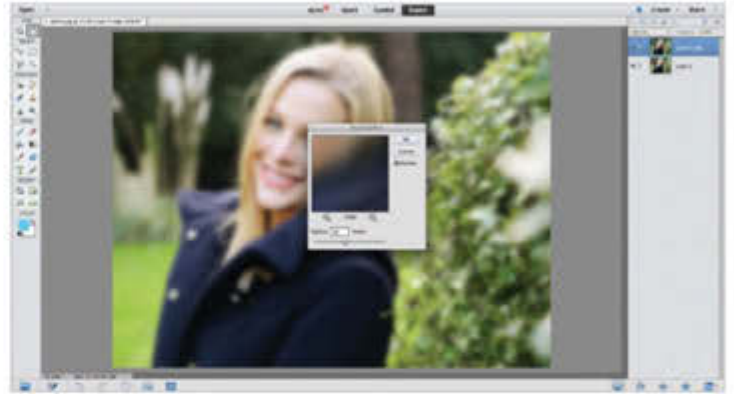
Blur and focus

Add gleam and exposure to all the right places



Duplicate

01 Duplicate the image layer. This will be the one that we apply the focus to. Duplicate the background layer. This will allow you to easily tone down an effect just by controlling the layer opacity.



Apply Gaussian Blur

02 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and alter the Radius for how blurred you'd like your image to be. You can pick anything from 12 to 30 pixels; you can even go as low as 5 for a subtle glow.



Set blend and opacity

03 Turn the Opacity down on this layer; we've gone for 50. This will calm down the effect, and bring back some of the original image's focus. Set the blend mode to Screen, and your image will become brighter and more exposed, with a classic soft-focus effect.



Add a mask

04 Inject focus and contrast by adding a mask to your blurred layer. Select a big, soft, black brush, preferably with a low opacity, and just paint over the layer until you reveal what you want. Adding focus to a face can help accentuate wispy hair in a subject.

Other blur styles

Use this technique with other styles of blur



Motion Blur

Motion Blur adds action to your shots. Go through the same steps, only choose Motion Blur, and remember to mask out the front of the object to give the effect of travel.



Radial Blur

Radial Blur is similar to Motion Blur, but it works best on images with either a zoom or a wheel effect. Here, we've used the radial motion to create a star trail.



Average

An Average blur picks an average colour from the picture. Use the steps of the soft focus and you can create a filter; this creates pictures perfect for inserting text onto.

**NO MORE NOISE**

Use the Reduce Noise filter to combat the effects of high ISOs.

Fix indoor photos

Learn how to correct common indoor photo problems using Photoshop

Taking photos indoors can be a tad problematic if you're not using the correct camera settings or lighting setup. A lack of light can wreak havoc on your images, and you might find that your photos end up with a lot of unsightly noise or even a distracting colour cast. Using your camera's built-in flash can help in some situations, but if it's not used correctly it can wash out a subject and create harsh, unflattering shadows, all of which will leave you with a mammoth editing task.

Adjusting your ISO, white balance and flash settings in-camera will help you take better indoor shots in the future, but if you are after a

quick fix for your existing photos, just follow this guide in Photoshop. You will discover how to remove unwanted colour casts from your captures using Levels and the Selective Color adjustment tool, as well as how to reduce the level of noise that is present in your images, and soften the effects of face-on flash with Curves and layer masks.

Each step-by-step is easy to follow, even for beginners, and the results are instant improvements. We've even included some advice on how to prevent these common problems from affecting your photos in the future.

Minimise noise

Discover how to remove and prevent noise from appearing in your photos

Noisy photos are a common problem when shooting in low light and indoors. Noise indicates that a high ISO setting has been used, which increases the camera's sensitivity to light, enabling you to capture brighter images. High ISOs, however, are notorious for adding noise, which can reduce the quality. To prevent noise, select a low ISO and choose a slower shutter speed so that more light is let in during exposure. You will need a tripod to avoid blurry shots.

"High ISOs are notorious for adding noise, which reduces the quality"



Zoom in close

01 Open your image, go to Filter>Noise>Reduce Noise. Once the dialog box appears, click on Basic control. Zoom in to a noisy area within the preview box on the left, to help you monitor the adjustments and changes.

Remove colour noise

02 Remove colour noise by slowly dragging the Color Noise slider right until it softens. See before and after results by clicking and holding on the preview box. You can now reduce luminance noise.

Preserve the details

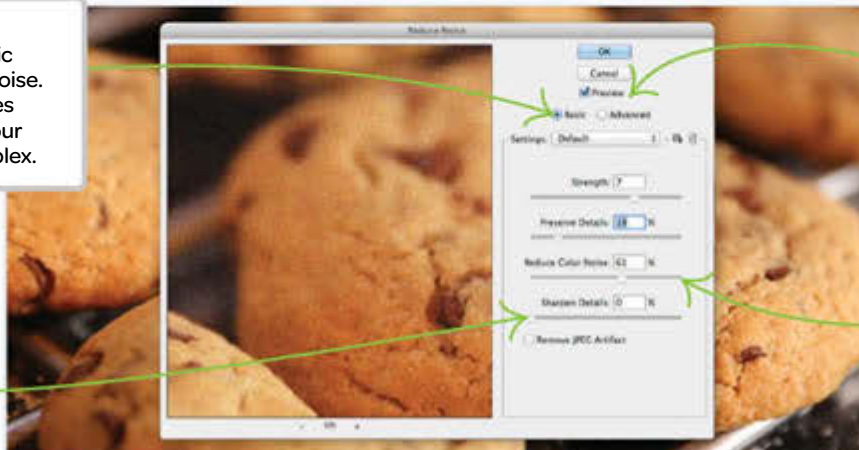
03 Drag the Strength slider right until the luminance noise fades. You can then increase the Preserve Details slider, which will bring back some detail without re-introducing noise. Click OK when happy.

BASIC CONTROL

Keep things simple using Basic mode to effectively reduce noise. The Advanced option requires a good understanding of colour channels, which can be complex.

SHARPEN DETAILS

Keep the Sharpen Details slider at 0% and sharpen the entire image after you've reduced noise via Unsharp Mask from the Filters menu.



PREVIEW RESULTS

Zoom in on your image in the preview screen to see adjustments. Click and hold the preview box, to see before and after.

REDUCE NOISE

Remove colour noise by increasing the Reduce Color Noise slider. Then balance the Strength and Preserve Details slider to remove luminance noise.

Soften the effects of flash

Learn how to make your indoor flash photos appear more flattering and natural

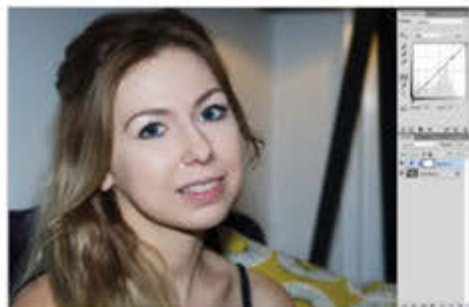
Your camera's built-in flash can be essential when shooting in limited light. However, auto flash settings have a habit of creating strong shadows, cool colour tones and bright highlights. To fix in-camera, select the slow-sync flash setting, to capture more of the surrounding ambient light. Diffusing the flash can also help, so either position a piece of white paper over the front of the flash or rotate the flash head so the light bounces off a surface first.

"Either position a piece of white paper over the front of the flash or rotate the flash head"



Enhance flash images

Soften shadows and warm up your flash photos in an instant



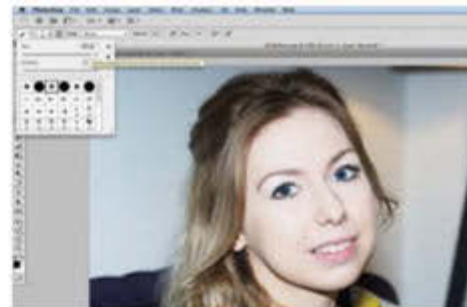
Add a Curves adjustment

01 Select the Curves adjustment from the 'Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Add two anchor points around one square in at either end of the diagonal line.



Brighten the background

02 Drag the top anchor point to the left in order to brighten the image and then do the same with the anchor at the bottom. Ignore the results for now, as you really only want to brighten the background here.



Select the layer mask

03 To remove the effect from your foreground subject, select the blank layer mask in the Layers palette. Pick the Brush tool and ensure you have a large-sized brush with a soft edge.



Preserve the foreground

04 Set brush Opacity to 80% and ensure the colour is set to black. Paint over your subject to remove the Curves effect. If you go over the background, change the brush colour to white and paint over to bring it back.



Warm the colour tones

05 Remove the cold blue tones with a Photo Filter adjustment layer. In the dialog box, select Preserve Luminosity and choose the Warming Filter from the drop-down menu. Increase the Density slider slowly.



Soften the shadows

06 Flatten the layers via Layer>Flatten image and select the Dodge tool. Select Shadows in the Range and keep Exposure around 10%. You can now lighten dark shadows by painting over them.

Correct colour casts

Remove unwanted hues

Indoor shots often have a dominant colour tone. Colour casts are created as light emits a certain colour temperature, which the camera can pick up on if you haven't selected the right white balance setting. To prevent this, scroll through your camera's white balance menu and use a setting that suits the type of light you're using.



Select Levels

01 Open your image and pick a Levels adjustment layer. Once the Levels dialog box opens, select the middle Eyedropper tool on the left. This will set the grey point in the image.



Start image



Select the midtone

02 Click an area in your photo that should appear as a midtone – somewhere neither in shadow or highlight. Most of the colour cast should be removed. You can select another area if it's not quite right.



Adjust the hue

03 To tweak the tones further, pick a Selective Color adjustment layer. In the dialog box, select Whites from the Colors drop-down menu. Adjust the sliders to remove any lasting colour cast from the highlights.



Tweak the results

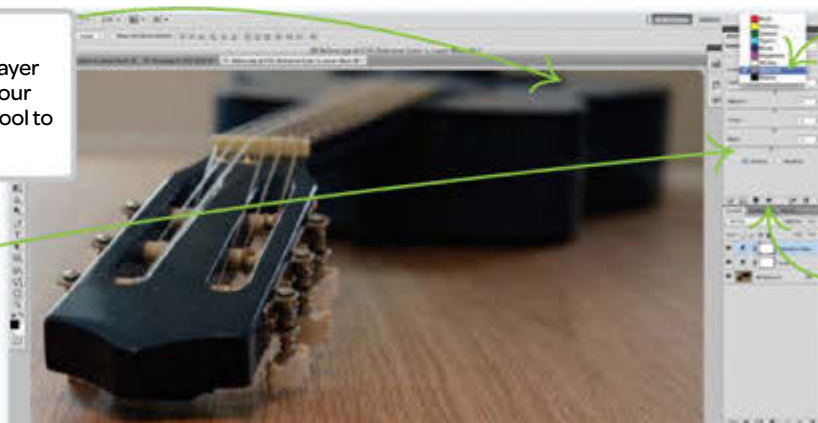
04 Select Neutrals and then Blacks from the Colors drop-down menu and follow the same procedure. Make small adjustments to avoid adding another colour cast. Use the preview by clicking the eye icon.

LEVELS ADJUSTMENT

Apply a Levels adjustment layer and remove most of the colour cast using the Eyedropper tool to select a midtone area.

ADJUSTING TONES

Slowly adjust each coloured slider in order to tweak the tones within the shadows, midtones and highlights.



SELECTIVE COLOR

Remove lasting remnants of a colour cast using the Selective Color tool. Simply work between the Whites, Neutrals and Blacks from the Color drop-down menu.

PREVIEW RESULTS

Continually press and hold the eye icon as you make changes, in order to see a before and after preview.

NO MORE NOISE

Use the Reduce Noise filter to combat the effects of high ISOs.

want to learn guitar?



Source files available

Make your text stand out

Ensure that your typefaces are as striking as can be with some simple highlighting techniques

If an image has a busy background, it's hard for anything to stand out, not least a line of text that might be written in a thin font and an inconspicuous colour.

Rather than change the colour and weight of the font, which in actual fact often doesn't help much, there are sneaky ways of making sure that your text is more prominent, and you don't have to change how it looks at all. By darkening or lightening the background in creative ways, you can open the door to a whole range of subtle techniques to counter the problem.

Remember though, it's incredibly important not to get carried away and merge a text layer with your background until it's standing out clearly. There's very little that can be done to correct indistinct text in a picture if it's merged in, unless you know the exact font, size and spacing that was used.

Let's take a look at three creative ideas for how to get the most out of type, and how to give it the attention it deserves in a picture. And why not mix two or more of these techniques for those times when you're feeling extra experimental?



Add a drop shadow

Lightly shade behind a headline text to give some extra clarity

Adding a shadow can be one of the most natural-looking (and easiest) ways to highlight a subject, but it can be difficult judging light and shade when trying to embed one into a photo.

Adding a drop shadow to some text, though, is considerably easier to judge. Use the Layer Styles to choose an angle, strength and size, and give your text a bit of depth.

“Adding a shadow can be one of the most natural-looking (and easiest) ways to highlight a subject”



Space the distance

01 Ctrl/right-click your text layer and choose Blending Options. You'll see the Drop Shadow checkbox to the left. Set the Distance far enough so that you can see the shadow from the text independently. Now we're ready to edit.



Set the options

02 The three main options in the Drop Shadow menu are Distance, Spread and Size. Adjust these in accordance to the shape of the shadow you wish to create, and alter opacity to change the strength. Use the Angle icon to choose where the shadow falls.



Touch it up

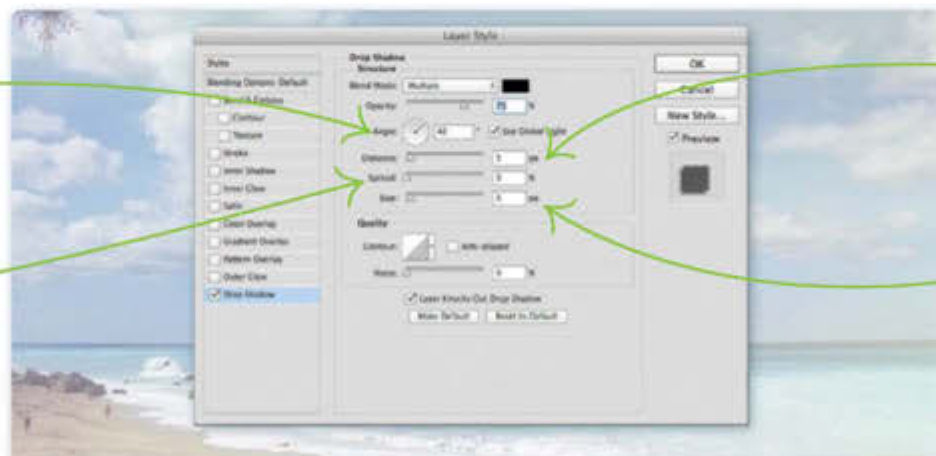
03 With this particular text effect, we're using text that has been slightly masked out. To finish up, Ctrl/right-click, rasterise the layer style and mask around where the text was masked out originally, just so the shadow doesn't look too strong.

ANGLE

Decide on where the light should hit the text, and thus where the shadow should form in relation.

SPREAD

The Spread setting dictates whether a shadow falls into a wide space or a small one. Great for creating longer shadows!



DISTANCE

Use this to choose how far or near you'd like your drop shadow to be from the text.

SIZE CONTROL

If you create a big shadow with the Size option, lessen the effects with the Opacity slider at the top.

Add shadows with Multiply

Use blend modes to quickly change the colour behind your text

Using a Drop Shadow on your photo automatically combines shading in the right places with a Multiply blend mode. But what if you wanted to create a shadow yourself?

As with anything in Photoshop, you get far more control and customisation from learning how to create your own effects from scratch. Using Multiply to add shadows is a great technique, but it can open up possibilities of different colours, too.

“You get more control and customisation from learning how to create your own effects from scratch”



CREATIVE MODES

Play around with blend modes to discover the ideal combination for the image you are working with.



Duplicate the text layer

01 Start by duplicating your text layer. Having separated these layers into two, the lower one's going to form your shadow, and the upper one is going to remain as the text layer.



Blur original text layer

02 Blur the lower layer by going to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. By doing this, the upper layer will look like it's glowing, but we're going to change the colour of the lower one to make the text stand out.



Duplicate blurred layer

03 It's only a light blur on the lower layer, so duplicate the layer until it's stronger. When you've done this, merge the blurred layers together. It doesn't matter if you make the blur too strong, as you can reduce opacity.



Set to Multiply

04 Change the blend mode of the blurred layer to Multiply. This darkens the picture with the colours of the top layer; you might choose to end here, or you might even want to use the Color blend mode.



Choose a colour

05 If you want a coloured shadow or glow, create a layer above the blurred text layer. This is going to define the colour of the shadow, so pick a gradient or colour that will make the text stand out from its background.



Create a clipping mask

06 Ctrl/right-click and choose Create Clipping Mask. Only the pixels on the coloured layer will cover the pixels on the blurred text layer. Reduce the opacity if the effect is too strong.

Apply a stroke

Get creative with text and outline it with a stroke

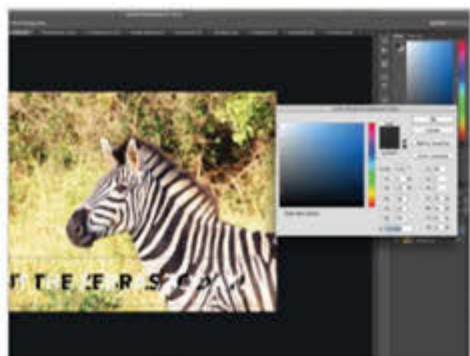
A Stroke layer style is perhaps the most obvious way that you can outline anything, and if you're inventive, you can create anything with it, from line drawings to cartoons. It is a really rather diverse tool when you know what you're doing and it's pretty simple to pick up.

You can use it to accentuate text as well, but why not go even further and use it to outline a text box? Here's how.



Make your selection

01 Create a layer between the text layer and the background layer. Use the Rectangular Selection tool to select behind the text, and make a box just big enough to cover the text.



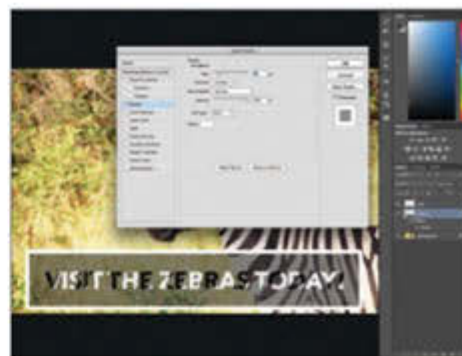
Choose your colour

02 Head to the swatches and choose a colour for your box. Given that we've got black and white text, we're going to go for a dark grey, but you can go for anything; even a gradient. Fill your selection with this colour.



Reduce Fill

03 We're going to make this box translucent using the Fill slider in the Layers palette. Fill reduces the opacity of the layer, but it doesn't affect layer effects, which will come in useful in a minute.



Stroke

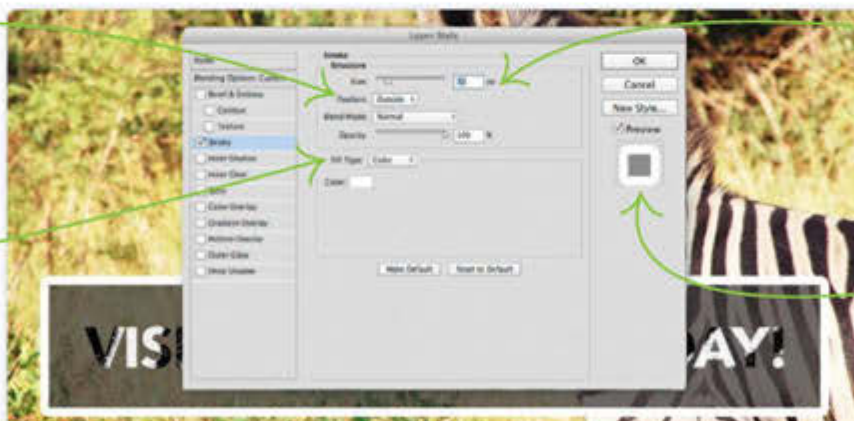
04 Ctrl/right-click and go to Blending Options. Along the left-hand menu, go to Stroke, and choose a border for this translucent box. Choose a complementary colour to the ones already picked.

POSITION

Choose whether you want to stroke inside the shape, on the outside of the shape, or along the edge's centre.

FILL TYPE

Choose whether you want your stroke to be a solid colour, a gradient or a pattern.



SIZE

Change the size of the stroked line; an outline will have curved corners though, regardless of the object's shape.

PREVIEW

See how the stroked line will look around an object with a basic preview to the right.



Start image

Straighten a horizon

Use Elements to level out a picture with minimal effort

Human error happens, and when it turns out that your photos aren't blessed with straight horizons, there are some simple fixes. Sure, you can manually rotate the picture, work out the horizon by eye and crop, but it is far more civilised (and a lot quicker) to use one tool to straighten up with a simple click.

The Straighten tool in Elements is one of the simplest photo fixes you can apply. It aligns a photo perfectly with just a single line, and deceptively, it can change the look of a picture completely. But this

brand of editing magic isn't just reserved for Elements; the same trick can be used in Photoshop too, as the tool is situated in the Crop options in CC. It shows the angle that a picture is out by, so you don't even have to align by eye.

It's not just landscapes that can do with a straighten either; why not try this technique out on portraits, or even drawings and composites, to get the perfect balance? Let's check out how to use the Straighten tool and bring pictures back on the level.

Level up Use the spirit level for the perfect straightening



Open your picture

01 Firstly, open up your picture and identify what needs to be straightened; in this picture, it's obvious. The picture's aligned with the skyscrapers and not the horizon. Select the Straighten tool – the spirit level icon to the left-hand side, situated in the bottom-right of the panel – and let's begin...



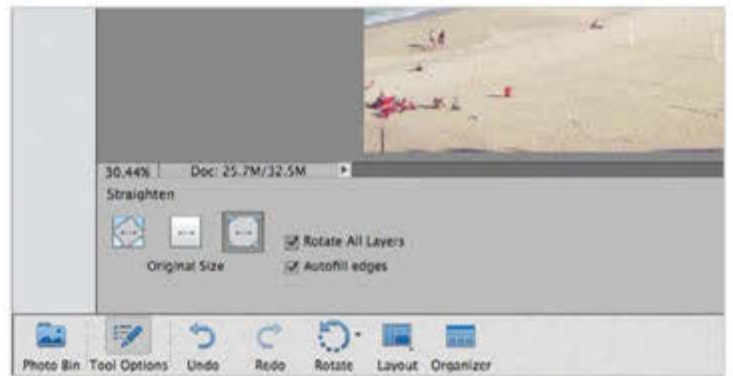
Start straightening

02 Simply drag the tool from one end of the image across to the other to straighten. Start exactly on the horizon and make sure that the line you're drawing aligns perfectly with the skyline. Once you let go of the tool, it completes the edit. Use the Undo (Cmd/Ctrl+Z) and draw again if it isn't quite perfect.



Check out the options

03 Across the bottom panel, there are three options depending on the edit. You can choose to remove the background of the edited image, you can grow or shrink the picture depending on the edit, or you can keep the size of the photo and just rotate the image within the borders. Select one before editing.



Finishing touches

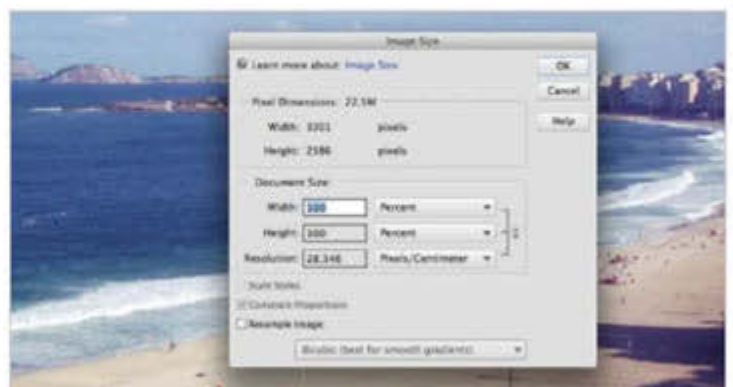
04 Depending on which option you picked in the last step, you may wish to make a couple of finishing touches. Get rid of the excess white space if you have any and resize the picture back to the original dimensions if need be. And remember, there's nothing to stop you realigning a picture until you get it right!

Extra edits Touch up your picture after you've straightened it



Clone

The Autofill Edges tool can get rid of white corners left over from a straightening, but you may wish to cover up your corners manually, using the Clone tool. Simply use the Alt/Opt key to select a patch of the picture, and then brush over the corners to hide any spaces.



Resize the image

The other option is for if you've made the picture smaller by straightening it. In this case, head to Image>Resize and enter a new size – perhaps the original size of the picture before straightening – to compensate. You may need to crop anyway to accommodate the new perspective.



STUDY SUBJECTS

Take a look at people with facial hair in order to give you a better idea of where it should sit on your subjects.

MIMIC TONE

Make sure that you vary the shades and hues of the hairs that you are adding to the beard if you want it to feel realistic.

EXPERT TIP

What does it mean?

SOFT FOCUS: It is used in photography to gently soften harsh edges. This makes it the perfect finishing touch for any project using the Brush tool or the Clone Stamp; you can disguise the editing you've done slightly, and give a dreamy finish to your picture.

Remove or add facial hair

Use brushes and cloning in Elements to have full control over beards

Hair is famously difficult to select, but it's a lot easier to edit and create facial hair on a subject. While there are theoretically plenty of ways to create a beard, one of the easiest is a less obvious choice. By creating a brush and adjusting the Scattering and Spacing in its settings, you can paint hair over a subject in a matter of seconds, without having to individually place every single hair.

Getting rid of a beard is just as simple. The Clone Stamp can be used for all sorts of photo-fix edits, but it's a great option when it comes to replicating hairless skin in a bearded area.

By learning the first two techniques of adding and removing stubble, you can reshape the facial hair on just about any subject. With a little help from the third tutorial, you might choose to replace the facial

hair in a subject or change the style of beard completely. So while it may seem like a tricky task to work with hair, facial hair need not be. Read on and discover how to take control of beards with our top tips and techniques.

"You can reshape the facial hair on just about any subject"



Add facial hair

Give a subject a beard by duplicating a single hair



Draw your first hair

01 Start off by using the Eyedropper tool to select the colour of your facial hair. Pick your colour from the hair or eyebrows for this with a brush of about 2 pixels and make a small stroke to create a single hair, on a new layer.



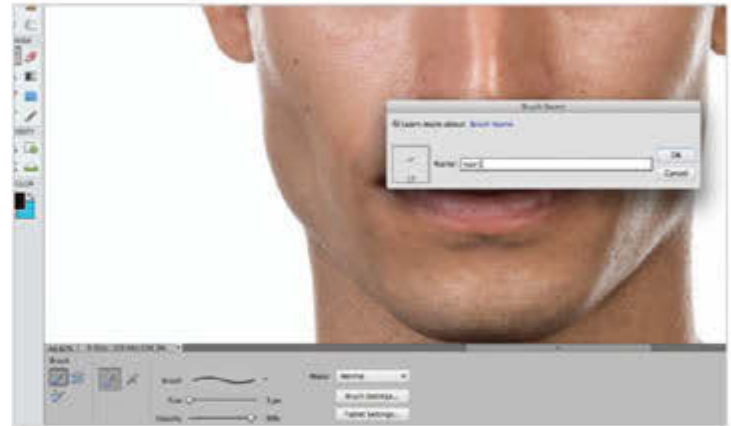
Adjust brush settings

03 Before we start using the brush, we must change the settings so that the brush scatters hairs across the face, and not just in clumps. Set the Fade to 35, Hue Jitter to 2%, Scatter to 40% and Spacing to 152%.



Brush in different directions

05 Change the angle of the brush and start painting in different directions around the mouth and cheeks according to where the hair in that area grows. Remember hair above the lips grows outwards, and hair on cheeks and below the chin grows downwards.



Save as a brush

02 Hold Cmd/Ctrl and click the preview of the layer. This will select only the pixels you've brushed with. Go to Edit>Define Brush from Selection and choose a name for your new custom brush. This is what you're going to use to paint the facial hair with.



Start brushing

04 With this new brush, paint a little in the direction of wherever the brush points; adjust the angle in Brush Settings to change this, and tweak the Roundness of the brush to change the size of the brush slightly.



Finish and touch up

06 Complete the facial hair and use the Eraser to just lightly touch up any stray hairs that might have scattered away from the face. Reduce the layer's Opacity down to 90% to keep the hair subtle and even add a new layer for another shade if need be.

Remove facial hair

Shave a subject using the power of the Clone Stamp tool

Now that we've added hair to a subject's face, what about doing the opposite to an image? Removing hair is just a simple photo fix for the Clone Stamp to handle; erasing an entire beard is a little more difficult. It's important to be subtle with opacity and brush size of the Clone Stamp tool in order to keep a natural finish.

"Removing hair is just a simple photo fix for the Clone Stamp to handle; erasing an entire beard is a little more difficult"



Begin cloning

01 Begin by selecting the Clone Stamp tool and gently cloning from the cheek over the facial hair. Use Alt/Opt to select a patch of skin, and set the Opacity to 50% to make small strides with it, so that you don't clone too much at once.



Clone bigger areas

02 Start cloning bigger areas by increasing the size of the brush. It will look patchy to begin with, but we're going to fix that in a minute; just make sure you copy the colour, light and shade to keep the face looking natural.



Smooth over

03 With a bigger brush and an Opacity of just 20%, clone big areas over the patchier parts of the face to even and smooth out the skin texture. You might even want to fetch the Dodge and Burn tools, just to touch up the shading on the newly-shaved areas.



Give a soft focus

04 Merge your entire picture into a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E) and add a Gaussian Blur of 8 pixels by going to Filter>Blur. Set layer to Screen and reduce the Opacity to 50%. This will give another overall smoothing to finish off your image.

Add and remove

Combine both of the techniques to re-craft facial hair onto a subject

Now that you've mastered how to add and take away facial hair, use both techniques to fix up any subject. You might want to give a different style of beard as we've done here, but why not replace all the facial hair on a subject, to give them a light shave? The choice is yours.

"Give a different style of beard... why not replace all the facial hair on a subject, to give them a light shave"



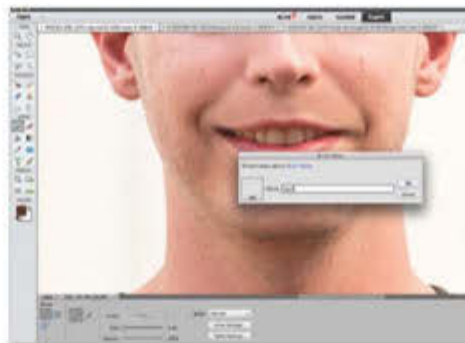
CLONE TEXTURE

The Clone Stamp is a very good tool for duplicating skin texture. To only duplicate colour, use a soft, round brush.



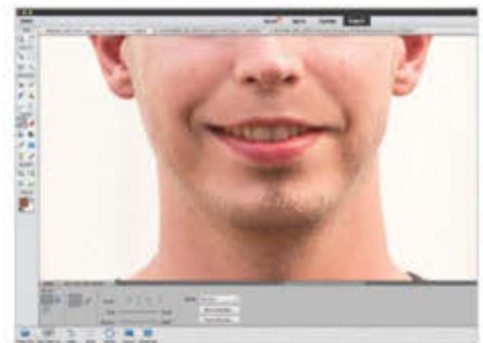
Clone

01 Remove the existing hair you want to by using the simple cloning technique from before. Clone patches from the cheek to the upper lip to retain the texture of the face, and remember to keep a low opacity to avoid duplicating specific patches.



Create hair

02 On a new layer, create a single strand of hair as you have done before, select the layer's contents by Cmd/Ctrl+ clicking the preview box and go to Edit> Define from Selection. Set Scatter at 40% and Spacing at 152% with Brush Settings.



Brush a beard

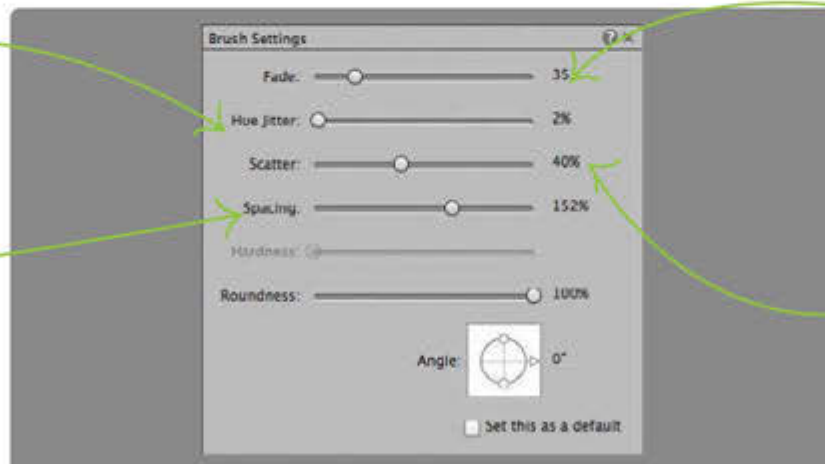
03 You may wish to brush over the space you've just cloned, as this way you can have complete control over every single facial hair. If you want to create a new beard, however, just brush as you would over the face, and tidy with the Eraser.

HUE JITTER

Choose to vary the hue of your strokes as you scatter them across the subject.

SPACING

Spacing sets the distance between the scattered brush strokes according to the brush's size.



FADE

Fade determines how many brush strokes will be clear and opaque before they fade away.

SCATTER

Scatter your brush strokes instead of placing them in crowded clumps over one area.

Change the colour of objects

Use selections and blend modes to bring new shades to objects in Elements

You no longer need to spend hours in the shops, wondering which colour dress to buy – with Elements, you can have any colour you like!

There are hundreds of ways to change colour in Photoshop and Elements, but clothes pose whole new questions. How do you deal with creases? What do you do about bleed? While Selective Color and even the Magic Wand can prove great options for colour-changing, there's nothing quite like a good, old-fashioned fill and brush.

As with most projects, brushing gives you incredible creativity. There are so many blend modes that you can experiment with when you brush, and that's just the start; you can apply your own highlights, touch up your own edges and even add streaks of completely different colours.

By combining this with selection techniques, you can change colour with more control. This is the most fun you'll have with changing colour – you might decide not to stop with colouring clothes and alter colour in all your photos!

KEEP SKIN TONE

Use lower opacity layers and the soft brushes to touch over where the original colour spills slightly onto the subject's skin.



Start image

COLOURING

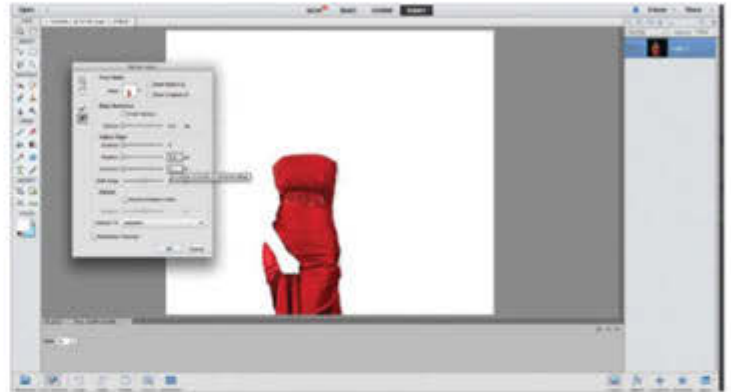
Use the Hue/Saturation sliders to experiment; simply scroll along and see which colour looks good.

Apply a recolour Paint your own colour changes



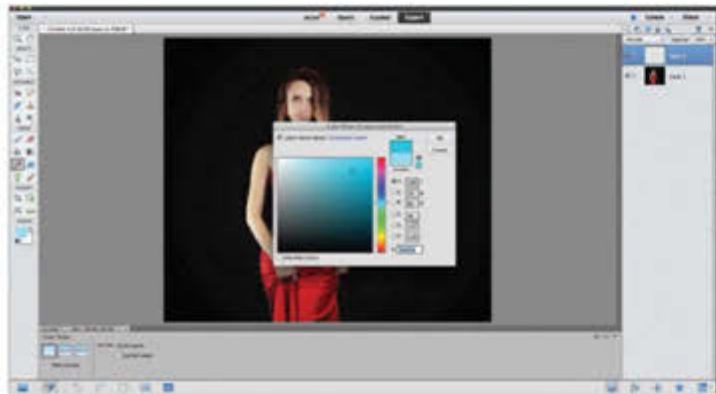
Select the clothes

01 Select the clothes you want to change the colour of. If the clothes are multicoloured and you only want to change one hue, only select that. If you want to change multiple colours, make multiple selections on different layers.



Refine the edge

02 Next, we're going to refine the edge of the selection, just so that we're only including the clothes. Black backgrounds change hue slightly when you adjust the hue of a whole picture, so make sure you've only selected exactly what you want to change.



Choose a colour

03 Add a new layer and pick a colour to change the clothes to. Set the layer's blend mode to Color and fill with your selected colour. Only the hue of the clothes will change; for a brightness change, duplicate your layer and set to Soft Light.



Touch it up

04 With your colour set, add some finishing touches. Adjust colour with Hue/Saturation sliders and add any highlights you like on a new layer. Do this using a light-coloured brush, with the layer set to Soft Light, and lightly brush over to create highlights.

Things to watch out for Avoid the common mistakes



Protect the subject

If your subject's clothes are bright, you may find that some of the colour has leaked onto the subject. Tidy this up with a new layer, set to Color mode and a low opacity, and just colour lightly over the bleed with your new colour.



Apply highlights evenly

Make sure when you apply highlights that you're applying them evenly, by not changing the blend mode and opacity before you brush. It's always best to get your lines parallel and clear, and this can be difficult to see in low opacity.



Keep highlights natural

Nothing will draw the believability away from your recolour like overly bright highlights. To avoid this, make sure you check the opacity, and toggle the eye icon to see how the clothes look with and without the highlights.

KEEP IT SUBTLE

Avoid going overboard with your edits on people's faces, as results can tend to look artificial.

CLEAR IMPROVEMENT

The skin texture has been enhanced and the lighting is less harsh.



Source files available

Retouch with actions

Create actions to simplify your workflow and create consistent edits across multiple images

Streamlining a workflow in Photoshop by using actions allows for a variety of different visual effects to be automated and applied to images in a consistent and efficient manner. On a simplified level, actions are little more than a series of normal Photoshop operations which are recorded so they can be executed in sequence quickly, without having to remember what steps to do and in what order.

A Photoshop action (.atn is its extension) is a file that contains a sequence of recorded steps that can be applied all at once to a file or

layer with the simple click of a button. The advantages of actions are numerous. They can create both complicated or simple edits, as well as perform repetitive tasks for speeding things up. Such a task could be as simple as adding a watermark of a specific size, or font type in a consistent manner, or as complex as separating colour from a texture in a portrait for advanced skin retouching.

We'll examine some of the more sophisticated techniques in the following article, where we will use actions for portrait retouching and also for sharpening our images.



Separate the image

Create two layers for working with both texture and colour



Spot Healing technique

01 Open the supplied image and remove some of the more obvious problem areas. Use the Healing Brush tool (J) or the Clone Stamp tool (S) to get rid of stray hairs, blood vessels in the eye and the odd major blemish. Preliminary editing allows for more refined alterations in the following steps.



Duplicate layers

02 In the Layers palette, duplicate the image twice and rename them High Frequency and Low Frequency respectively. This is known as 'frequency separation', or splitting the image into two layers. This enables editing on the colour and the texture of the skin independently of each other.



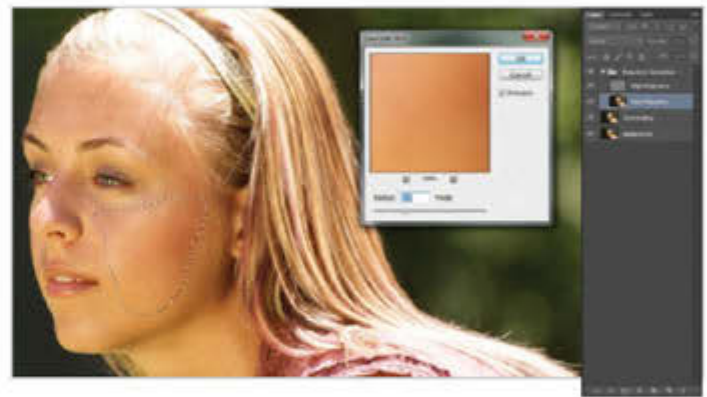
Steady with the blur

03 Hide the High Frequency layer by clicking the eye icon and select the Low Frequency layer. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Blur the image until the sharpest detail has gone, which usually requires a Radius of about 3-4 pixels. This is the layer that holds the colour information.



Apply settings

04 Choose the High Frequency layer and turn the visibility on. Go to Image>Apply Image and use Source which is the name of the file you are working on, Layer to Low Frequency, Invert switched on, blend mode to Add, Scale: 2, Offset: 0. Click OK. With the High Frequency layer selected, set blend mode to Linear Light.



Ensure you are on the correct layer

05 Now that the image has been separated by colour and texture, editing can begin. Skin smoothing will be done on the layer marked Low Frequency as the High Frequency layer retains texture.

Selective retouching

06 Using the Lasso tool, select areas of the face that require smoothing. Choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and select a low value of around 5px for the selected area. Continue to highlight areas that require attention and repeat.

Sharpen images

Create an action to improve detail with Smart Filters



Duplicate layer

01 Open the supplied image and create a duplicate layer of the background by selecting **Cmd/Ctrl+J**. Label it **Sharpen**. Editing on a duplicate layer allows for the opacity of the effect to be easily reduced.



Soft Light

03 Next, add a quick mask to the layer so that adjustments can be made with the mask and change the layer to **Soft Light**. Alternatively, **Hard Light** can be used for more sharpening or **Overlay** as required. Some experimentation can be used to find the ideal effect.



Vitaly important

05 When used properly, High Pass Sharpening allows a user to pinpoint the lines in a photo that require sharpening, and then control the strength at which they are sharpened. As a general rule, sharpening an image should always be the very last step in the photo retouching process.



High Pass

02 Go to **Filter>Other>High Pass**. A good place to start for sharpening is in the 3-pixel range, but it really depends on the image and the amount of sharpening that is desired. Click **OK** to confirm and apply changes.



Smart Object

04 If using Photoshop version CS or CC, convert the layer to a **Smart Object** by selecting the layer and choose **Filter>Convert for Smart Filters**. Then, simply apply the High Pass filter to the new Smart Object in the same way as outlined above.



Retouch the image

06 Finally, use the **Healing Brush** tool (**J**) or the **Clone Stamp** tool (**S**) to get rid of stray hairs and the odd blemish. These touch-ups can really enhance the final image.



Sharpen images

Actions are perfect for darkening edges of an image



Vignette benefits

01 A vignette is a popular effect where the photo is highlighted by dark borders. Vignettes are a simple yet subtle way to guide the eye to the important subject of an image.



Lens Correction

03 Next, go to Filter>Distort>Lens Correction and a new window will open. Adjust the slider labelled Vignette until the image borders are darkened to the desired effect. A darker vignette will significantly add mood to an image. Click OK to apply the effect.

Duplicate the layer

02 Open the image and create a duplicate layer of the Background by selecting Cmd/Ctrl+J. Label that new layer as Vignette. Editing on a duplicate layer allows for the effect to be easily reduced.



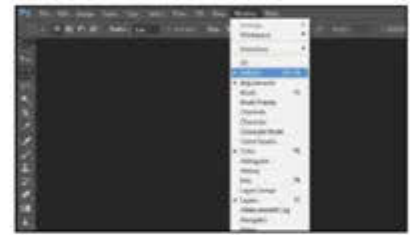
Final image

Final adjustments

04 Reduce the Opacity of the layer labelled Vignette in order to achieve a more blended and realistic appearance. A border that is too dark looks artificial and can detract from the subject of the photograph. With editing, sometimes less is more.

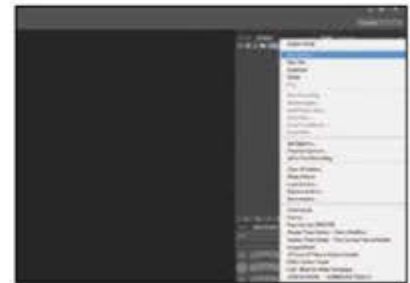
Expert edit

Record an action



Activate actions

01 Open the Actions palette by selecting the Window menu and verify Actions is checked. Alternatively, Opt/Alt+F9 is the hot key command for activating the Actions palette.



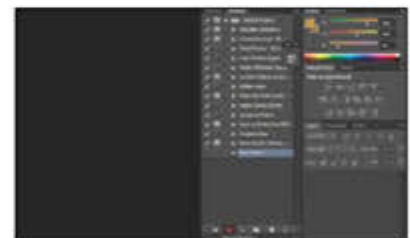
Create the action

02 After deciding what kind of action you would like to record, use the drop-down menu in the Actions palette to select New Action.



Define and Record

03 A dialog box will open, in which the settings for the action can be defined, including its name, shortcut key and colour. Once these fields have been filled in, hit the Record button.



Complete recording

04 The Record button will display in the Actions palette when active. Carry out the edit you want to record and once all the steps for the action are complete, press the Stop button to finish up the action.

Improve exposure and contrast

No Curves? No problem. Elements has plenty of built-in solutions for image editing

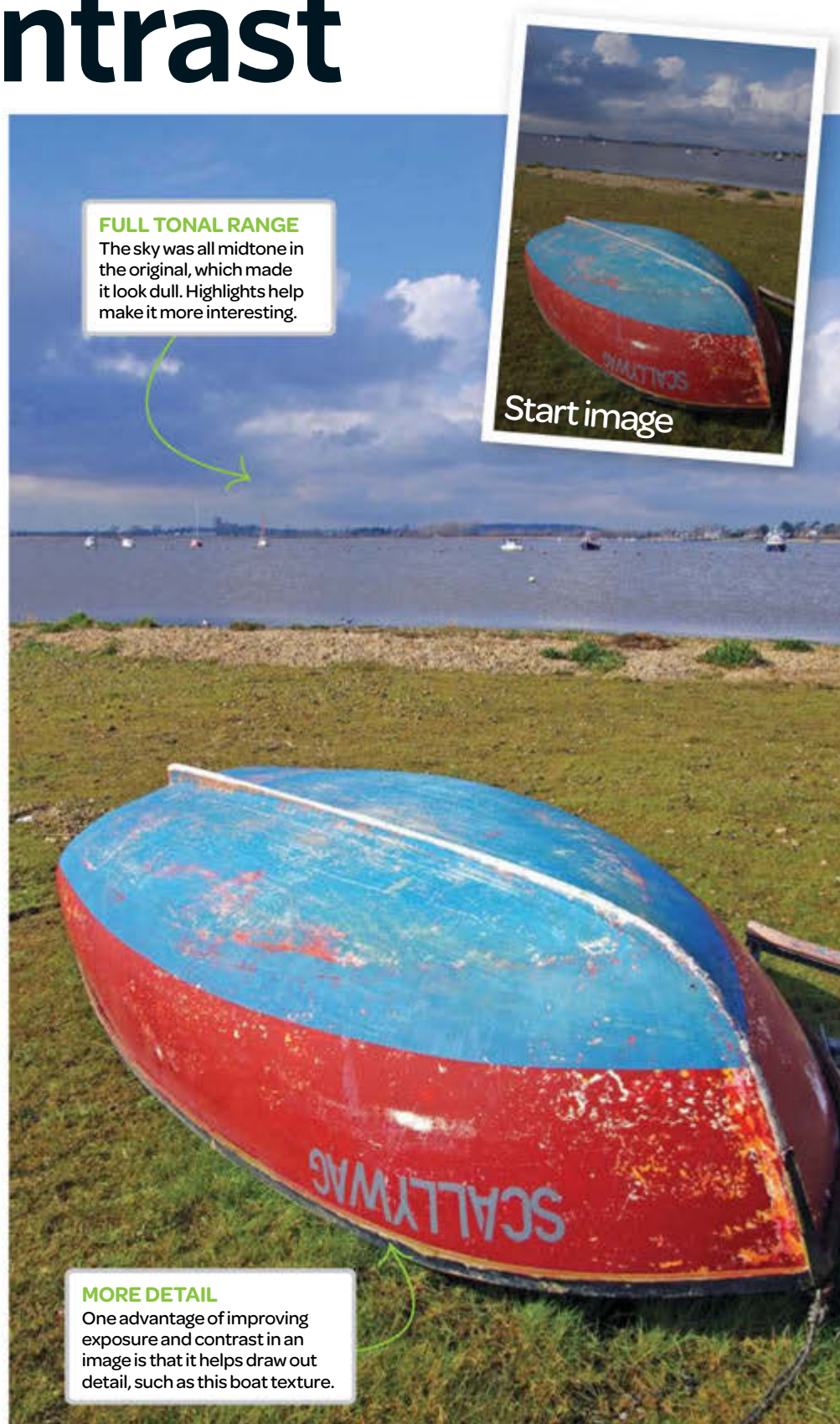
Both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements offer a range of tools for improving the exposure, contrast, colour and tone of your photos. A good place to start is usually the Levels command, which works in the same way in both programs, editing three points in your image.

However, in Photoshop there is also the Curves command. This is an incredibly precise tonal control, giving you 14 points to adjust, making it far more powerful than Levels. It does have a steeper learning curve (if you excuse the pun) though, and it can be intimidating for beginners to get to grips with how it works.

Photoshop Elements doesn't have Curves. There is a similar option under Enhance>Adjust Colors>Adjust Color Curves, which enables you to improve the colours in your images by selecting from presets and adjusting sliders to change the curve. This only offers three points of adjustment, however, the same as Levels and targets colour tone. Also, Levels can be applied as an adjustment layer, whereas Color Curves can't, so it is a destructive process (always work on a duplicate!).

Over these pages, we will look at ways you can improve exposure and contrast, without the power of Photoshop's Curves.

“There is a similar option under Enhance>Adjust Colors>Adjust Color Curves, which enables you to improve the colours in your images by selecting from presets and adjusting sliders”



Use Elements' quick fixes Give your images a boost in Elements



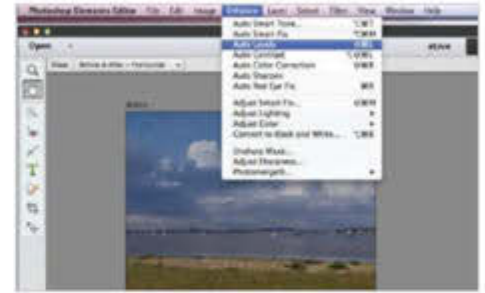
Control exposure

01 In Element's Quick mode, the first thing that you can try is the aptly named Exposure fix from the left-hand menu. It is easy to use, as you simply go through the thumbnails and pick the one that is best for your image. You can fine-tune using the slider.



Work with Lighting

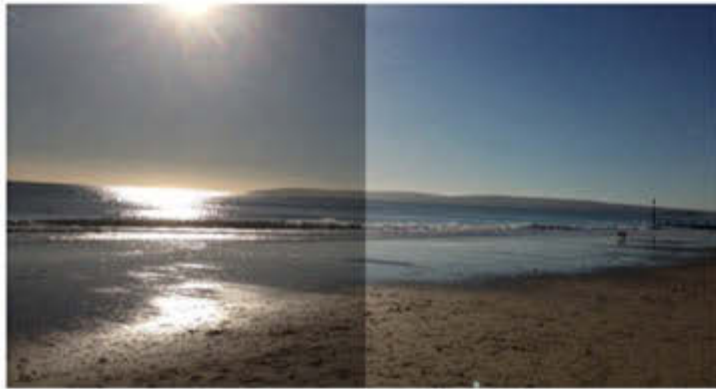
02 The Lighting option is a great way to play with the tones of your image without having to use the Levels dialog box. You can again pick from the thumbnails, but you can target the Shadows, Midtones or Highlights separately. The preview lets you see just what will change.



Use Auto controls

03 Within the same Lighting tool box, there are buttons for Auto Levels and Auto Contrast. You can also access these from the Enhance menu, along with Auto Color. Automated controls analyse your image and make edits to improve the exposure/contrast without you having to do more than click.

Other methods More ways you can edit the exposure and contrast in Elements



Fix underexposure

An underexposed image has tones that are too dark. A quick fix for this is to open the image in Photoshop Elements in Expert mode. Duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J), then set the duplicate's blending mode to Screen. Adjust the Opacity to suit.



Fix overexposure

Overexposed images are usually too light. You can fix this in the same way that we fixed the underexposed image, except that you set the blending mode to Multiply. It's difficult to hide blown highlights, but for mild overexposure, it works well.



Adjust Color Curves

We mentioned the Adjust Color Curves option in our introduction, and while it's not as good as Levels for exposure and contrast, it is great for improving colour tone across your image. Pick from the available presets and then fine-tune with the sliders to achieve the effect you want.



Smart Fix

We haven't mentioned it yet, but Elements' Smart Fix is designed to improve your exposure, tone and colours in one click, which is a great place to start! Simply select the option from the Quick edit mode menu and pick a thumbnail or hit Auto to process your snap.



Source files available

ADD NOISE

It seems counterproductive, but adding a touch of noise helps to give an interesting texture to night shots.

FILTER EDITS

Using the Paint Daubs filter produces interesting specks.

Tweak night-time shots

Bring your photos out of the dark with Elements

Night-time is an infamously difficult time to take photos for any photographer, especially if you're just relying on the available light. So if the images are difficult to take in the first place, imagine how difficult it will be to edit these same snaps!

While it's tempting to discard a picture for being too dimly lit, Elements can prove extremely helpful in the editing department. Noise is a common and complex problem in low-light photography, as is trying to find an interesting way to enhance a dark shot without affecting the atmosphere. The darkness of a piece need not restrict your creativity,

though, as in just a few simple steps, and by using editing tools and techniques that aren't necessarily designed for low-lit pictures, you can shine new light on your darker snaps.

Whether you're hoping to restyle the light of a piece or you're simply looking for a little imaginative flair to brighten up a night-time portrait, these tutorials are packed with inspiration on how to tweak even the most shadowy photos. And if you're also a photographer, they'll save you a fortune on top of the range lighting equipment, too! So read on and get ready to breathe new life into low-light shots.



Creative ideas Give your darker photos an artier edge with filter edits

Often it is the subtle edits that can be the most rewarding, especially when it isn't obvious that a photo has been edited at all! There are plenty of artistic techniques in Elements that can enhance a low-light

image particularly well, and the deep shadow areas in a photo can really bring out a retro, dusty lens texture. Alternatively, have a go at experimenting with a well-placed light leak...



New grey layer

01 Create a layer and fill with grey: this will form the basis for speckles, so shade isn't important. If you wish though, you can create a new layer at the end, set to Screen, and brush a lighter grey for a gradient tone.



Add some noise

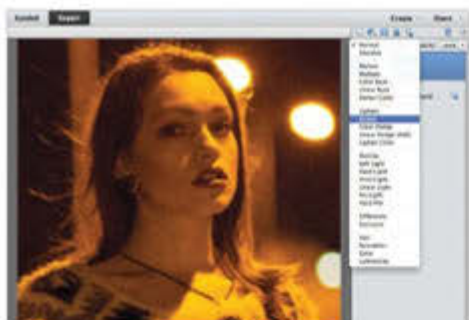
02 Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Choose the maximum 400%, select Uniform, and make sure the noise is Monochrome. Set the blend mode to Screen, and it should look like an old television set display.



Paint Daubs

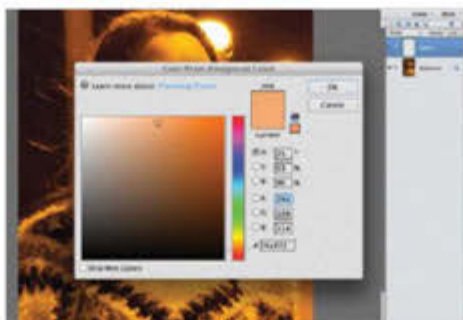
03 Head to the Filter Gallery and choose Paint Daubs. Set Brush Type to Simple, click OK. Inverse so the specks are white and the background is black, and duplicate until you're happy with the appearance.

Light leaks Blend light into your images



Add new Screen layer

01 Add a new layer, and set the blend mode to Screen. This is going to be the layer you brush the light leaks onto, so by switching the blend mode from the start you're readying the canvas for the effect.



Choose colours

02 Light leaks are often bright, pastel shades that complement the original image. Delicacy is key with darker photos; choose a soft brush, and touch around the edges of the picture.



Tidy up

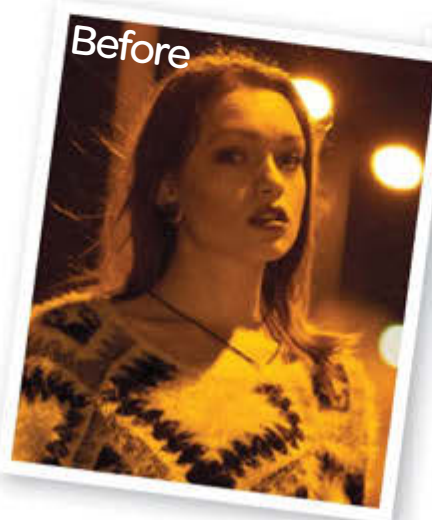
03 Reduce the Opacity and ensure that the leak isn't too garish. Maybe research light-leaked photos for inspiration, and experiment with colourful glows in your pictures.

Expert tip



Flip to inverse

It can be difficult to pick up on the little details while editing dark photos, so why not temporarily inverse your picture while you're working on it by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I? Inverting is a great trick to use while you're using Selection tools - you'll be amazed by how many more shades you see when the colours on the picture are flipped.



Lighten the background

Adjust the brightness of a background, without having to edit the subject

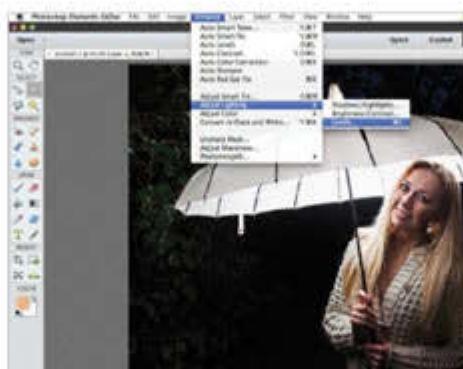
Most of the time, a camera's flash only covers the foreground of the photo. We've all seen snaps of a well-lit person against a forebodingly dark background, and striking the perfect balance is a tricky thing indeed. Luckily it's only a few simple steps away in Elements!

"We've all seen snaps of a well-lit person against a forebodingly dark background, and striking the perfect balance is a tricky thing"



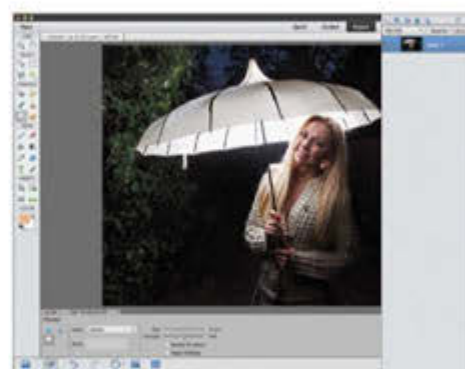
Select subject from image

01 Firstly, we need to select the person in the photo, so that we can exclude them from the brightening process. Choose either the Magnetic or Polygonal Lasso, and draw around the subject; when you've done so, right-click, and choose Layer Via Copy.



Lighten

02 Head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels. Below the Input Levels map, you'll see three sliders; move the middle one to the left to lighten the picture. Generally 1.48 is a good figure, but different photos may vary.



Tidy up

03 Merge the foreground and background together. Use the Smudge tool around the edges of the subject to soften, and go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation if the brightening has made the picture pale.

Learn to reduce noise

Get rid of the fuzz that overexposure creates

Often Photoshop users avoid brightening up images, simply due to the fuzzy edges that an edit can leave. The Noise Reduction filter only goes so far, but there are manual ways of touching up your edited image, and if you're feeling creative, it can definitely leave a much nicer finish to your piece.

"Photoshop users avoid brightening up images, due to the fuzzy edges that it can leave"

Start image

DARK AND MOODY

Taking a manual approach to reducing noise is a good way of getting a more effective result than with filters alone.



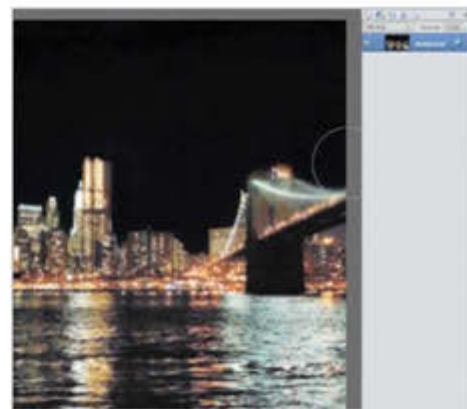
Identify the noise

01 Lighten up your image slightly with the Levels tool, and see where the noise appears most; in this case, it's just around the buildings in the sky. Select the whole sky from the picture with the Polygonal Lasso and create a new layer.



Brush in colour

02 Select a midnight blue colour and begin to brush the colour in the selection parameters of this new layer. This will give a blocky texture to the picture, but simply change to the Multiply blend mode to adjust this.



Smudge

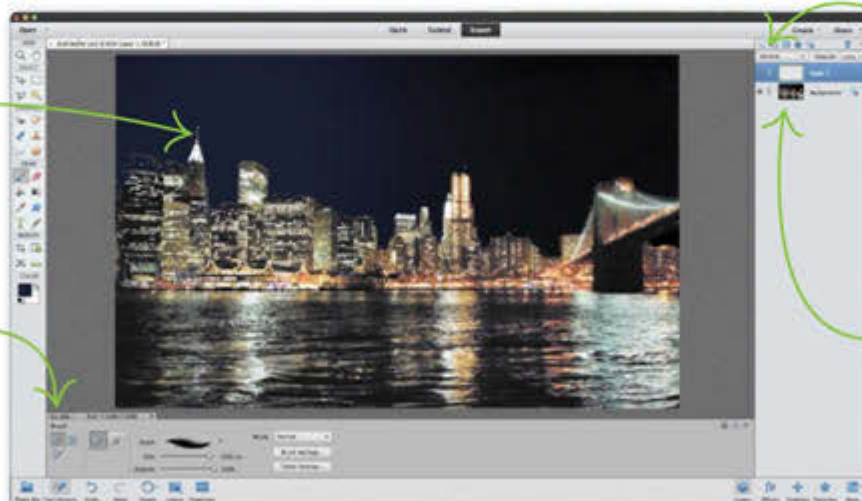
03 Merge all layers and use the Smudge tool with Strength set to 50% to start smudging, at least around the lights, to soften the whole picture. Leave some lit-up buildings, but most edges will need smoothing over.

SELECTION

Use selection tools to pick out and draw around the sections in which you'd like to reduce noise.

BRUSH

Choose a dark colour – or perhaps even a gradient – in order to complement the deep black of the original sky.



BLEND MODES

Multiply and Lighten blend modes can help mix the original sky colour with a brushed block of colour for a natural-looking effect.

BACKGROUND LAYER

Try not to lighten the foreground too much, otherwise noise will seep through to this layer, too.



SOFT FOCUS

Add a soft focus effect by duplicating an image, applying a Gaussian Blur and then setting the layer to Screen.

LAYER UP

Create multiple layers of brush strokes if you find that you need to, as this will help to avoid patches of brush strokes.

Remove tattoos

Eradicate any ink on your body using simple techniques in Elements

Everybody knows that tattoos are permanent, but what if you could wipe them off whenever you liked? It's just another impossibility that Photoshop Elements can make reality.

Tattoo removal relies on the usual touch-up techniques you apply to any kind of image, but there's an extra need to be subtle; one false move can make skin look harsh, or make the lighting on the body look unnatural.

There are so many techniques that can remove a tattoo, and it all depends on the subject's skin and how much un-inked skin is showing in the picture. The Clone Stamp is

great for reassigning patches of a subject's body somewhere else, but the Brush tool is much more useful in smaller areas. There's nothing to stop you combining all three of these techniques for the ultimate edit, either.

Which technique is right for you, though? Read on and learn how to erase a tattoo you might regret.

"There are so many techniques that can remove a tattoo, and it all depends on the subject's skin"

EXPERT TIP

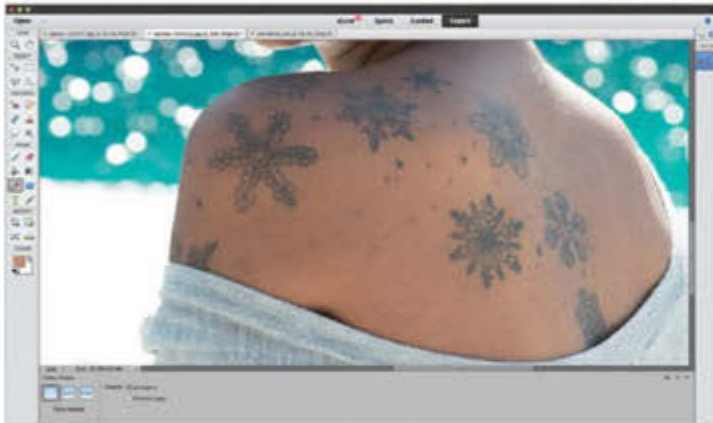
What does it mean?

BRUSH TOOL: Cloning or Content-Aware are great for copying large areas. The Brush tool can be used in a tighter space, as you only need a few pixels of space to select a new colour to paint over. Alt/Opt-click and brushing as you edit.



Brush over it

Cover tattoos by painting new skin and smoothing all over



Eyedrop colour

01 Firstly, accustom yourself to the Eyedropper tool; this is one of your most trusted companions when it comes to big brushing projects. Click on the little icon on the left-hand side and use it to pick a colour close to where you want to paint over.



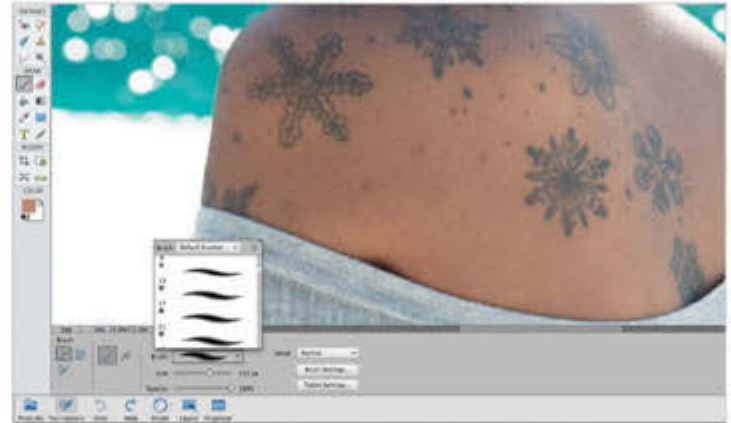
Brush slowly and carefully

03 Create a new layer, just to be on the safe side, and brush over the tattoo. Eyedrop new colours by Alt/Opt-clicking, and just brush over the tattoo with the colours you select. Take it slowly to start with, and just brush around the edges.



Keep brushing

05 Create another new layer and pick a slightly bigger brush (we went for 300px). Apply this colour all over by using the same Eyedropper and Brush technique that you've been doing this far, until the skin looks smooth and natural.



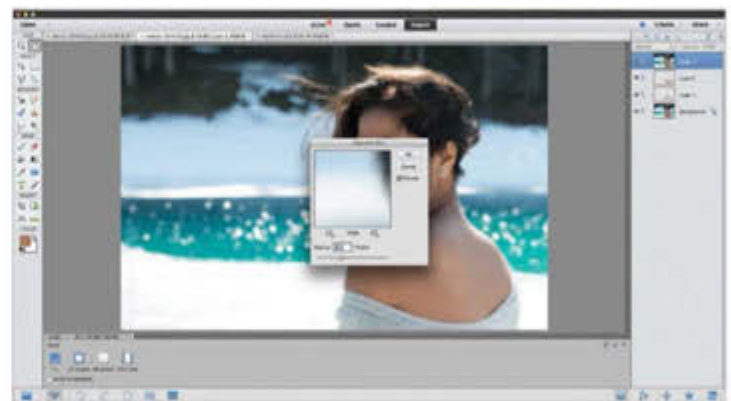
Select the Brush

02 Now go to the Brush tool. We're going to need a soft brush with 100% Opacity; if we were cloning we'd pick a low Opacity so that we wouldn't duplicate patches of skin, but as we brush, we're creating blocks of original colour.



Brush some more

04 Now, brush over the whole tattoo. Blotchiness is inevitable at this stage so don't worry too much, but just try and pick colours close to the skin's natural colour to paint over the top of the subject. Use the [and] keys to alter brush size.



Add soft focus

06 To give an overall finish, apply a gentle soft focus to the picture. Do this by merging all your layers and duplicating your layer. Set the blend mode to Screen and then head to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and apply a blur of 10-12px.

Clone the designs out

Assign patches of existing skin to cover up other parts of the body

The Clone Stamp tool is the obvious answer when it comes to repairing skin, and unsurprisingly it's one of the first ports of call should you want to remove a tattoo. Unlike the Brush tool, it takes texture into account, and it gives a natural finish. So exactly how do you remove a tattoo with the Clone Stamp? Let's take a look.

"The Clone Stamp tool is the obvious answer when it comes to repairing skin, and it's one of the first ports of call"



Set opacity and hardness

01 Head to the Clone Stamp tool icon and start off by adjusting the settings, so that we can get the most out of this tool. Move the Opacity down to 50% and make sure you're using a soft brush. This way, the edges of where you're cloning won't be visible.



Start cloning

02 Press Alt/Opt-click to select a patch of non-inked skin, and then brush over the tattoo to replace it with the selected area. With a low Opacity, you'll have few duplicated areas, but you'll need to keep brushing over the same spots to keep on erasing the tattoo.



Finish up

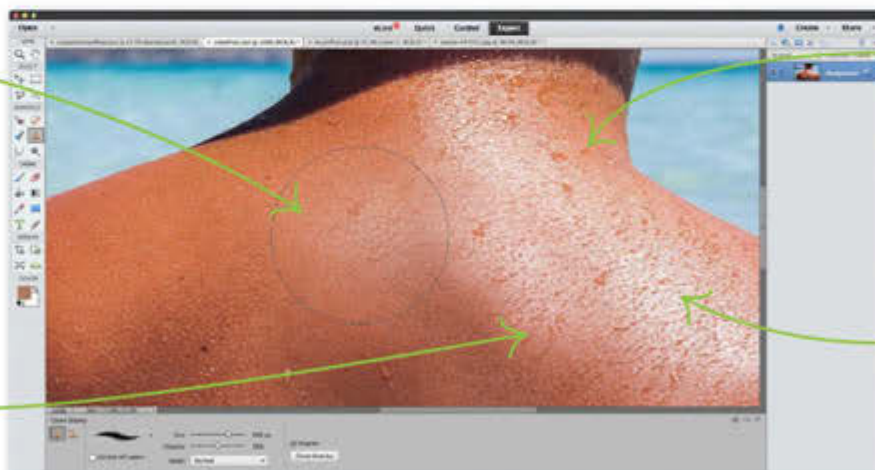
03 Keep cloning over the tattoo, selecting different patches of skin until the dark outlines of the ink fade, and the skin is the same colour all over. It's important to try and make sure the lighting is consistent by cloning shine and shade.

SOFT BRUSHES

By using a soft-edged brush, you will ensure that the area you're replacing will naturally blur into the picture.

LOW OPACITY

Using brushes of low opacity means that you can clone slowly and subtly, rather than replacing whole chunks of skin.



TEXTURE REPLACING

The Clone Stamp is a great tool for editing skin because it replaces not just colour, but texture too.

LIGHT/SHADE

Be sure to take the lightness and darkness on the subject's skin into account whenever you are applying an all-over edit.

Edit with Copy and Paste

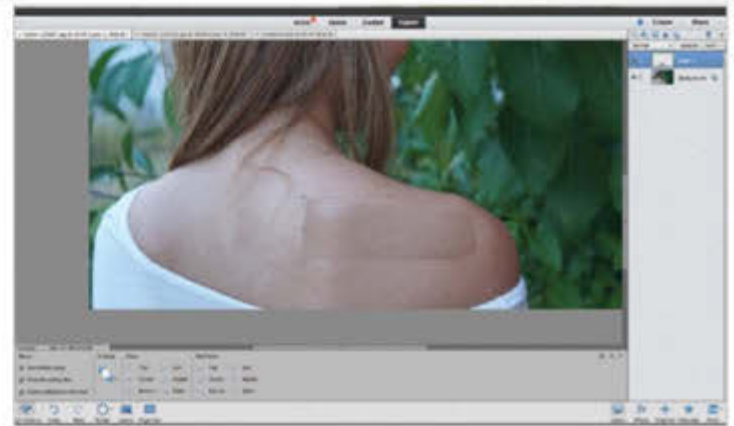
Simply place skin into position, and blur it to fit the subject

It might seem so obvious that it just wouldn't work, but by copying and pasting skin where you want it, you can totally cover tattoos. It's a natural-looking solution, as you're using pre-existing skin.

What is not as simple, though, is blurring it into your picture. Masking can be a tricky business, but if you're precise, it's the quickest way to remove a tattoo from somebody's skin.

"Masking can be a tricky business, but if you're precise, it's the quickest way to remove a tattoo from somebody's skin"

Start image

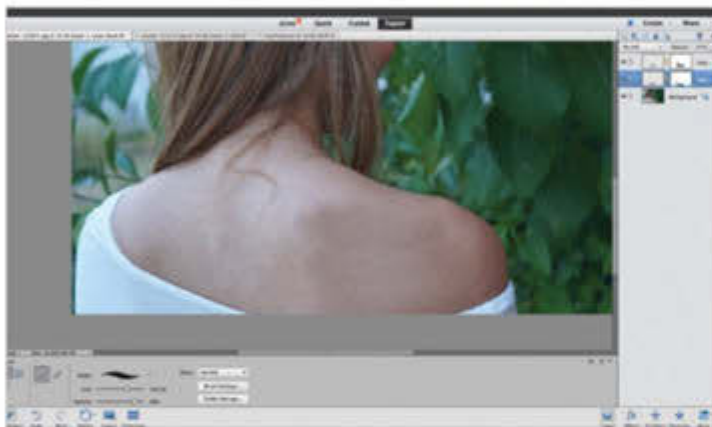


Make a selection

01 Start off by making a selection of the skin you want to place over the tattoo. Pick a patch with similar tone, lighting and shading, and select it by using a Lasso, a Quick Selection or the Selection brush.

Copy to a new layer

02 With your new patch selected, Ctrl/right-click and Layer via Copy. Move this patch over the tattooed area of skin until it's covering it with a fair amount of space either side. You might want to duplicate to make several patches of skin cover the tattoo.



Mask

03 Press the mask icon in the Layers panel, and select a soft brush, with Opacity of around 80%. Feather the harsh edges of your pasted skin so that it blurs into the rest of the picture. Do this for however many patches of skin you've pasted over the tattoo.

Dodge and Burn

04 Merge all layers of the picture by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E. It's very unlikely that your picture looks completely natural in terms of lightness and shade, so pick the Dodge and Burn tools and just touch up where the light should hit the skin.

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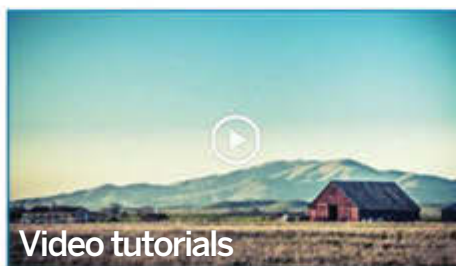


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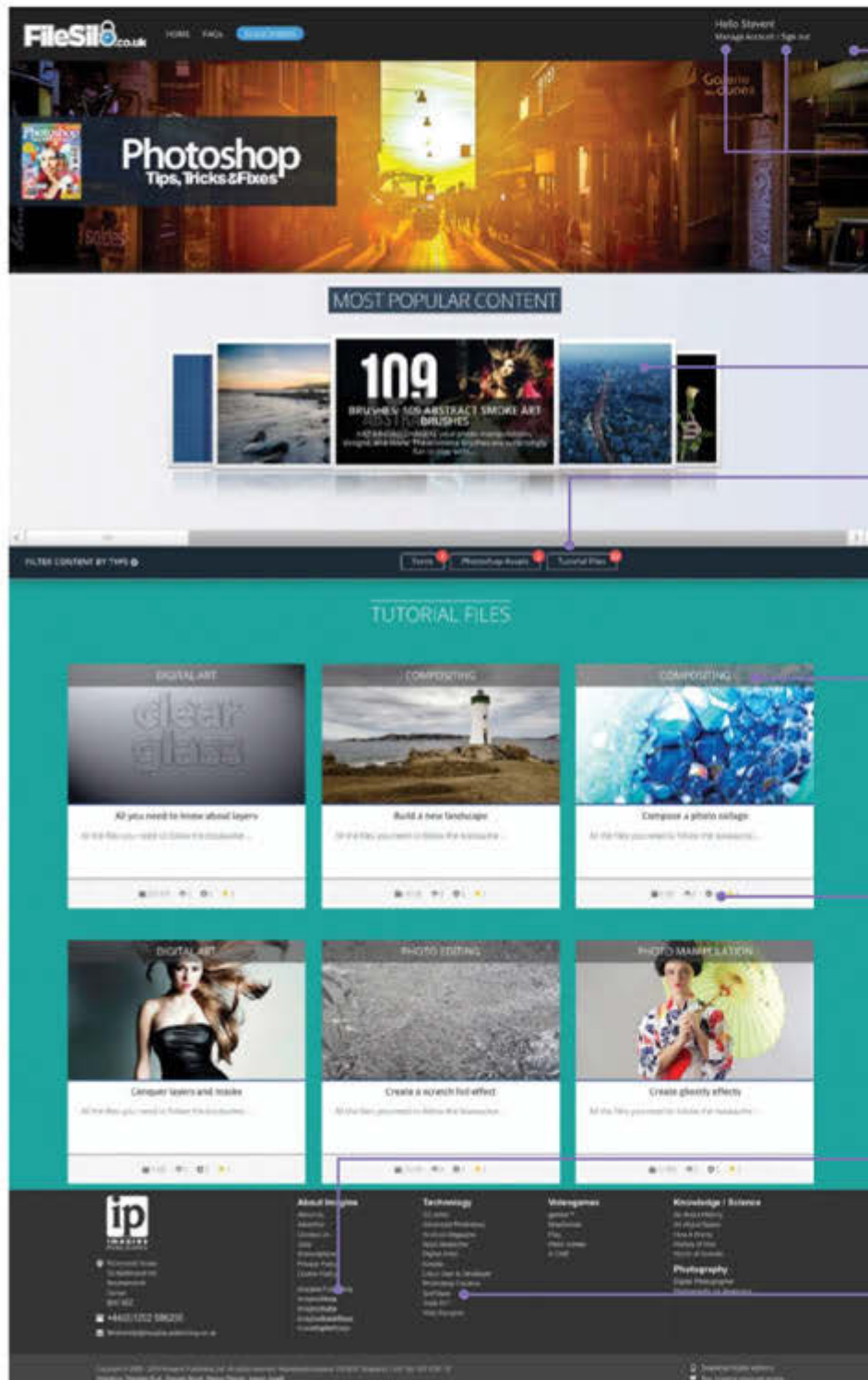
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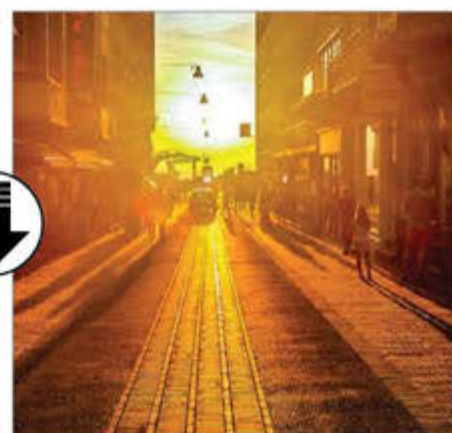
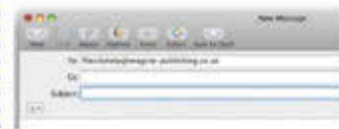
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